

LIFENOTES

selections from our book

LOVE – In Search of a Reason for Living

[links to references in the Notes are found on our website – www.LifeNotes.org]

What is this book? It is an essay about life, a book about you. Its purpose is to send you on a journey through your heart, mind, and soul. If you take the journey you will find in yourself the reason for living. If you care at all about life and people and yourself, you will take the journey.

If you are a humanist, a skeptic, simply do not know what to believe, or are just looking for a reason to live, please read our book, it represents an objective, rational, reasoned, search for a reason for living.

We begin our journey.

WHO AM I?

The day you were born you began a learning process that will continue for the rest of your life. You were, from the beginning, molded by your surroundings, parents, relatives, playmates, by all the general attitudes, ideas, and beliefs you came in contact with. As you grew older those early experiences affected and altered, both consciously and subconsciously, what you felt and did about all the day to day things that went on around you. Each new year of life added to your past, changing the way you viewed every new day, influencing how you reacted to everything from the simplest daily routines to complex events touching you, your family, and the world you lived in.

As you grew yet older you interacted with people from different backgrounds with differing ideas about life. You found yourself actively defending, modifying, or abandoning your early beliefs, adapting the various ideas you came in contact with to fit your developing perception of life. Perhaps new ideas were introduced to you by people with dynamic personalities who espoused one philosophy or another. Faced with the challenge of those ideas, you may have tenaciously defended your early beliefs, dismissing unfamiliar concepts with alarming ease by resort to ingenious, if not solid, arguments. On the other hand, you may have completely abandoned your past and adopted new beliefs opposite to those you once cherished.

However, like most people, you probably belong to that vast river of humanity which seems to move along in a fairly discernible direction, concerned at any given minute with living that moment in the easiest, most pleasant way possible. If so, you were and are more or less able to blend ideas, feelings, philosophies, desires, and realities to justify what you want to do. Along with the majority of people, you were and are good at sending questions and ideas about the meaning of life and death, as well as thoughts and feelings about what is good and right, deep into the cloudy regions of your mind.

Whether we realize it or not, most of us are voluntary prisoners of our minds, unwilling to question who we are and what we believe, happy to simply roll along through life. Most of us will live from birth to death in a world we have fashioned from our past to suit our present. Many will find comfort through unquestioned acceptance of their family's, or even a friend's, religious or philosophical heritage. Yet few will ever stand free from their present beliefs and daily lives to ask what is life about? Who am I? What should I do? What will I do? If there is meaning to life, and a reason for living, those questions must be answered.

If there is a true meaning to life, nothing that you do, say, or think will change that truth. What good is it to live your life believing what you are doing is right if your beliefs are false and what you are doing is wrong? It is an understanding of life that we seek, a search for something in life worth living for.

If you are to find the meaning of life you must be willing to recognize it if and when you see it. To do so requires you to open your mind and accept whatever you discover, even if it is totally opposite to your experiences, beliefs, and wishes. If you are to understand life you cannot hide in the comfort of daily living, clouding your mind to avoid discomfort. You must not reject what you discover if it does not fit what your life has been, is, and what you want it to be.

Since our discussion deals with the purpose of life, if what we are saying is true, your willingness to understand is a willingness to grasp the very reason for your living. If the answers you find are different from those you have molded for yourself, you must decide whether to continue on the path you are on, or go another way on a new path toward a new destination.

If You Are Who You Are, Then Who Are You?

Each of us is born, we live lives of various lengths, and then we die. Each of us has, or perhaps develops, a separate nature and existence, a being, which is unique to us and sets us apart from every other person who lives or has ever lived. Indeed we share similar characteristics, but no two of us are the same person. As humans, each of us is distinct, each of us is an individual being.

What makes each of us unique is the fact that we perpetually make choices between alternatives. Our choices seem to be far more than mechanical selections based on some complex biological decision making scheme. Rather, your choice seems to be based not only on what you believe will happen if you make a certain choice, but also on what you "want" to happen. You, as all of us do, possess the ability to engage in what we will call "rational thought", whereby each of us weighs many variables in a process that includes concepts of good and evil, right and wrong. "Rational thought", as we define it, is reasoned thought that presents us with choices between alternatives. You ultimately reach a point in your rational thinking where that certain quality of being which is unique to you takes over and you make your free choice among the alternatives.

Biologists have demonstrated that the line between animal and human "thought" is not as clear as was once commonly assumed. There are animals that appear to have self-awareness, solve problems, communicate, exhibit emotions, etc. While there may be a very high degree of intelligence in the animal world, animals seem to lack the ability to make free choices by

consciously "thinking" about alternatives and consequences. It appears that only human beings possess the necessary consciousness and symbolic languages that allow us to engage in significant abstract thought.

For example, animals may or may not harm other animals, yet they do not appear to be able to make reasoned choices to harm or not to harm by considering whether it is right or wrong to do so. An animal may make a "choice" to act kindly toward another animal based in part on their "inherent personality" and "basic instincts". Yet it appears that an animal cannot make a rational, reasoned, choice to go against "inherent personality" and "basic instincts". Human beings can choose to do that which they would not otherwise do, to go against what their instincts, personality, and emotions tell them to do. Scientists often take this apparent distinction for granted. Rather than accept without question that we are little more than highly evolved animals, we should recognize our ability to engage in "rational thought" and give more consideration to the apparent fact that we have truly unique mental abilities.

Unlike any animal, your choices are made after rational thought. Even though you have instinctive feelings for self-preservation, procreation, self-satisfaction, etc., decisions may be freely made for reasons and purposes totally opposite to those instincts. You can think about what you are going to do, and can choose to do what you believe is right and good even if it places you in grave danger. Similarly, you can choose to do what you believe is wrong and evil even if you would instinctively do otherwise. Your decision is your decision, a product of your singular existence and being. Able to engage in rational thought, and to choose freely among various courses of action based on those thoughts, you are in a very real sense what you choose to be.

One of the oldest controversies in human history deals with what the significance of rational thought really is. Perhaps the most debated aspect of the question is whether or not rational thought actually gives us the ability to make "freewill" choices. Many scientists argue that every rational choice you make is in fact predetermined by your biochemical makeup. They admit that when you have a choice between two options you engage in both conscious and subconscious thought processes before making what you consider to be your decision. However they argue that no matter how convinced you are that your choice between A and B is your own, your brain chemistry actually dictates your selection. They suggest that your mind's decision-making processes cannot go beyond the level of chemical neurological activity. Therefore, even though your choices may in one sense still be said to be your own, they are in effect predetermined. Despite the agonizing doubts, careful thought, and numerous changes of mind that accompany daily decisions, most scientists believe the final decision would be totally predictable if they could decode your brain.

This idea of "determinism" not only shows up in science, but in some ancient philosophies and religions as well. Taken to its logical extreme, many believe in super-determinism, where all that is in the universe was in the past part of a closely related system in which "matter and energy" were joined. Many scientists and philosophers view everything from sub-atomic particles to human beings as part of a universe whose destiny was forever set at creation by the forces between its constituent parts, and whose future unfolds in a billiard ball like progression of "predictable" actions. To this school of thought, humans are prisoners of subatomic laws that

determine the behavior of atoms that determine the behavior of molecules that determine the behavior of nerve cells that determine the behavior of human brains that determine the behavior of human beings. Even though the chain is totally imperceptible to humankind, and a feeling of control exists as an inherent part of human existence, they insist that what seem to be "spontaneous" decisions and reactions are actually destined to occur without any possibility of variance.

While most scientists are comfortable with the idea of an ordered and well-behaved universe, many view the complexity and reality of life as requiring events to be based on something less than absolute certainty. On the sub-atomic level this idea has been recognized in the so-called uncertainty principle. Those who accept the uncertainty principle might be called probability determinists. They argue for a determinism as certain as any, one that also sees humankind governed by forces beyond its control. Yet the reality dictated by their brand of determinism can only be described by stating how likely it is that a particular event, chosen from a list of possible events, will occur. In other words, they can eliminate what cannot happen, can give you a list of events that might happen, and can even tell you how likely it is each individual item will take place, but they cannot tell you which of the possible events will in fact occur. The exact future of the universe may be uncertain, yet it is still fundamentally predetermined.

Modern theories dealing with chaotic behavior tell us that because of the almost infinite number of possible combinations created by the interaction between objects we cannot complete the necessary calculations to determine what will in fact occur next. Furthermore, some mathematical problems may have no solutions, and seem to be fundamentally "non-computable". It is simply not known whether or not non-deterministic physical mechanisms exist in our universe. Virtually all of the currently "favored" cosmologic theories dealing with chaos, complexity, and computability agree that given enough information and processing power (even if the required amounts approach infinity) the probabilistic behavior of even the most complex system in our universe is "in theory" mathematically calculable. It seems fair to say that all of the currently favored cosmologic theories conclude that our physical universe is, in some real sense, fully deterministic.

In a universe that had no living organisms, determinism would not be as hard to accept as it is in our universe inhabited by living creatures. One can visualize a universe devoid of life where every rock, every speck of dust, every atom, every sub-atomic particle, follows a pattern which was forever fixed at creation, and that expands into the future with absolute precision. In an inanimate universe, it is not as difficult to accept that rocks, specks of dust, etc., or even groups of these objects, have no "ability" to alter the course that the laws of physics dictate they follow.

It is much more difficult to accept that our universe, populated as it is by living organisms, is a totally deterministic one. If super-determinism is correct, we reach the intuitively unlikely result that the absolute time for every blink of our eyes is predetermined, every breath that we take is taken at precise moments and in exact amounts! There is nothing we can do to alter any of our physical motions - even the slightest twitch of our body occurs at the very moment it was destined to occur by the forces acting in the first second of the universe. Every change of our minds is inevitable, every thought we have ever had was predetermined and occurred without any chance of alteration.

If we live in a fully deterministic world, I was destined before birth to write precisely the words contained in this paragraph on the day and at the time and on the computer I wrote them on, and when the universe was formed you were destined to read precisely the words contained in this paragraph on the day and at the time you are reading them. At the beginning of the world, not only were you predestined to be precisely where you are right now, but you were also destined to be wearing the clothes you are wearing, have every hair on your head the exact length that each one is, have every object in the room placed precisely where it is, etc. Every thought you are having about what I am saying was predetermined to occur without the slightest variation, even your instant reaction to this very sentence was set at creation. This simply does not "seem" to be what actually happens, we intuitively "feel" that we can make meaningful choices among alternatives, perhaps so, perhaps not.

Even though current theories do not appear to allow for freewill, some scientists and philosophers argue that no matter how well ordered your chemical thought processes may be, you reach a point in each sequence of mental activity where the unique being which you are makes a decision. A decision that goes beyond the confines of conscious and subconscious biochemical processes. A choice made after "considering" the products of your biological thought processes along with abstract concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, etc. They believe the basic, profound aspect of human existence, which makes you who you are, transforms your choices among alternatives into "free will" decisions that transcend physical constraints.

It is very difficult for those of us who have grown up in a scientific world to visualize, let alone accept, human thought extending beyond the chemical confines of the human mind. Yet there has been no scientific evidence (perhaps because no experiment has been devised that could test the hypothesis) that would refute the jump from predetermined biochemical thought to human thought controlled by individual beings. Because no one has explained the illusive quality that might make each human being unique and give them control over their decisions does not mean that it does not exist, nor does it mean it does exist.

Some scientists and philosophers believe that determinism might be compatible with the existence of a physical, as opposed to a non-physical, consciousness that can be held to be morally responsible for its actions. Indeed some suggest that quantum effects may allow for meaningful freewill. It would seem that those scientists and philosophers do not adequately appreciate the fact that all the currently favored physical theories are based on fully deterministic causal relationships, be they probabilistic or otherwise, and therefore lack any mechanism for human freedom or responsibility. They incorrectly conclude that because complex physical systems exhibit almost infinite complexity, those systems might support some kind of metaphysical freedom. On close examination this is not justified, simply because in every accepted theory all observable physical systems, from Planck scale to the scale of the universe, are governed at every level by deterministic laws. The only escape from probabilistic determinism would be if the probabilities of quantum outcomes can be altered by rational thought, to date we have no objective evidence that those odds are subject to change. The idea that a physical consciousness, based on deterministic physical processes, might make meaningful choices, seems extremely difficult, if not impossible, to support.

Other scientists and philosophers argue that modern science has proven determinism to be "true". In fact, science has only begun to address the nature of human thought. On a sub-atomic level more questions have been raised than answers found. Research into the nature of physical consciousness has demonstrated the incredible complexity, and fundamental mystery, of the human mind. Paradoxes associated with thought experiments suggest we have not yet begun to understand the basics of human consciousness and the possibility of freewill. Even if the human mind can make meaningful statements about its most fundamental nature (it is not at all clear it can), nothing to date either proves or rules out the existence of human freewill. For the moment we ask you to accept the possibility that freewill exists beyond biological and physical constraints.

We note that no matter how predetermined your existence may be, it can be argued that "you" make freewill choices even if it is chemically determined what those choices will be, simply because "you" are the product of your biochemistry. While that argument, and variations of it, may be true by definition, it seems if we are to be held accountable for our actions we should have a freedom of choice that can be anticipated to be found only in that which is beyond human chemistry. We ask that you keep an open mind about the possible existence of individual control which makes your decisions truly your own.

Who Will You Be When You No Longer Are?

[Warning! There is a risk that as you read the following notes, you may misunderstand the discussion and think that we are suggesting that there is no "reason to live". That is not what we are saying at all! In fact we are saying the opposite, we have abundant hope that if you search for the reason to live you will find it. As you read these notes you must not become discouraged or depressed. If you are or become discouraged, if you disagree with anything that is said, or if you simply don't believe what we are saying is "useful" to you, please finish reading all the notes. Even if you agree with what is being said, and think you understand what we are talking about, please read every section. If you are to find the true reason for living it is necessary that you understand what is discussed in the last notes. We are convinced that after you read these notes and complete your journey through your heart, mind, and soul, you will find in yourself the reason for living. Anyone who is, or becomes, seriously depressed should always seek immediate medical help. If you find yourself distressed or depressed by our conclusions please read the Note – Distress & Depression at the end of our notes.]

If in fact you do exercise meaningful freedom of choice, what good is it to be a unique human being if at your death you cease to exist? If you do not continue to exist in some form after death, what good are all the experiences, decisions, triumphs, defeats, all the moments of your life? If you do not survive the grave, if you return to the state of being that preceded your birth, then I suggest to you that nothing in fact does matter. While over the ages men and women have sought to perpetuate themselves through their children, their place in history, their role in society, and through intricate philosophical webs of existentialism and other essays on physical man's importance, the fact of physical death remains. If each generation's death means the end of those individuals, then we are all faced with an endless cycle of creation and destruction, the meaning of which, if any, is beyond comprehension.

If there is anything in life we can count on occurring without fail, it is physical death. The successful bank president, the champion athlete, the housewife, the famous, the unknown, every human being, you, I, die. While all acknowledge the certainty of their eventual demise, few think about death until they are faced with it. The simple fact of death is not news to anyone, yet the reality of its impending occurrence is ignored by virtually every living person. The very nature of human life denies death and shrouds it in the cloak of future events, events that are not yet real and need not be dealt with in the present. Living is too important and time consuming to be concerned with mortality. The fact that you are moving steadily toward your death is most likely, and literally, to be the last thing on your mind.

Observing the inevitable death of every creature that inhabits the earth, we may have a recurrent feeling that death is the end. On the other hand, it is virtually inconceivable to us that all we are, all we have been, all we will be, will be rendered void in that moment of death. It goes against human nature to visualize the effective destruction of our past, present, and future, which accompanies death without existence beyond death. Yet if each human being does cease to exist, then all human beings are, or in the case of generations yet unborn will be, waiting their turn to cease existing. If each and every human being ceases to be, then the feeling of continuity that pervades the human race is false (please note, we will explain later why we do not believe that life is in fact destroyed by physical death).

In their arguments for humanism, existentialism, etc., philosophers have spent lifetimes trying to construct a difference between the apparent continuity of humankind, and the periodic death of individual humans. Most of us think of our ancestors as a link to the past, and our children as a link to the future, yet if we do not survive the grave each generation dies an isolated death that mocks any assertion that humankind has a continuing existence apart from its individual members. If each person's death results in their no longer existing, then no manner of historical recording, social progression, or other remembrance in the minds of those whose time to die is yet to come, can in any way affect, preserve, or make any difference whatsoever to those who no longer are. No one will survive to remember. If each of us ceases to be, then your life has no meaning and your choices make no difference.

We admit that this logic seems counter intuitive, and even wrong, but if we are willing to dissociate ourselves from the incredible biologic urge for self-preservation, both of the individual and the species, and are willing to apply purely objective reasoning, the logical conclusion, while discomfoting, is perhaps inevitable (there is at least one possible logical loophole we will discuss below that might give permanent meaning and value to a finite physical life). This is a very difficult conclusion to accept, it goes against our intuitive feelings about the continuity of human life, and against our assumptions that individual physical lives have some kind of meaning and value. Yet if we are little more than doomed animals, our intuitive feeling of meaning and value would not be surprising. From the very beginning, to assure survival of any species, evolution would certainly have instilled in living creatures the feeling that there is a reason for them to exist, a reason for them to crawl out of the ocean and build cities. If there is no life after death, and our lives are in fact consumed by "nothing", it is no wonder that our genetic heritage argues so strongly against that possibility.

Because it is so difficult to accept, we will consider our conclusion in more detail. It is logical to assume that if each person's consciousness is the product of their physical bodies, then individual physical consciousness exists only during that person's physical life on earth. If each of our physical lives proceeds from birth to death, then the consequence of each person's death necessarily follows their death. Who can be affected by that death? Certainly those who survive may be affected, but here is the "problem", the death cannot be of any consequence to the purely physical human being who no longer exists! The moment before the death of a human being perhaps it can be said that their impending death affects that being, but the very moment after the person dies, he or she is no longer around to be affected!

Let us assume, for example, that a comet collides with the Earth at some time in the future before humans have colonized space. Assume further that all life on Earth is annihilated by the collision. It is very hard to accept, but if consciousness is nothing more than a physical phenomena, if there is no non-physical continuation of life after death, the most logical, I believe the only logical, conclusion is that the complete annihilation of humankind is of absolutely no consequence to humankind! While the words may sound bizarre and counter intuitive, in fact they are not. The moment after the total destruction of humankind it can be said with some certainty that the destruction of humankind had no effect whatsoever on humankind, simply because humankind no longer exists to be affected.

If you accept that time has direction (we believe that even absent a "fundamental time", all events follow a causal, sequential, chain), then cause and effect, action and consequence, occur in a fixed order, the former always "preceding" the latter. Keeping that in mind, the idea that after the total destruction of humankind there would be no one left to be affected should not seem as bizarre. Assuming that one event will always precede another event in order of occurrence, if the event that is called the death of a human being is equivalent to the physical annihilation of that human being, the consequence of that event necessarily follows the event. If there is a causal sequence to events, then the annihilation cannot be of any consequence to a human being who no longer exists. Again, the moment before the destruction of humankind perhaps it could be said that the impending destruction affects humankind, but the very moment after humankind is destroyed there is absolutely no humankind left to be affected. Assume that the comet annihilates humankind at 12:00 noon, the consequence of that destruction occurs at 12:00 noon PLUS a moment in time, and at 12:00 noon plus the moment in time there is no humankind left to be affected. Indeed, there is no humankind around that is conscious of the fact that the comet struck the earth!

The same logic applies to the history of individuals not visited by a catastrophic event. If you believe that each human being is nothing more than an individual physical entity, and therefore that there is no life after death, then at the time of their death each human being experiences the identical individual annihilation that all humankind would experience together if the earth and its inhabitants were simultaneously "destroyed". If a human being dies at 12:00 noon, and there is no life after death, at 12:01 they are not "around" to be affected by their death. If an individual named Bill dies at 12:00 noon, at 12:01 Bill no longer exists to be affected by his death. If Bill is a physical entity that does not survive death, after 12:00 noon (i.e. - after completion of the sequence of causal events that precede Bill's death) you could search the entire universe for Bill and you would not find him (some readers are probably thinking that Bill continues to exist as

his world-line even after his physical death, we will discuss that later). Bill's death occurs at precisely 12:00 noon. Not minutes, or even moments, later. If there is no life after death, the very moment after the event known as Bill's death, Bill no longer exists. After 12:00 noon Bill cannot be affected by anything, including his death.

The logic goes even further. If you do not believe that human consciousness continues to exist after physical death, then death not only annihilates each individual's present and future, but also annihilates their past. Most people would agree that for an object to have a present and a future the object must exist. Yet many would make the distinction that while an object cannot have a present and a future if it does not exist, it somehow can have a past. It is clear that the present and future of an object are bound to the existence of the object, but so to is the object's past. Much of the problem lies in the popular usage of the words past, present, and future both to describe that which is part of an object (a "past" that belongs to the object, like a person's memories that "belong" to the living individual from birth to death), and to describe the existence of the object from a third party's view (a "past" which is a chronological description of the object, like a photo album containing pictures of an individual who has died).

It is a misconception to equate the fact that there is a "history" of all beings or objects that is set in the "past", with the statement that a being or object that no longer exists has a "past". The first idea simply states that the being or object existed over a finite period that is apparent to those who currently exist. The extension of the concept of such a history to the idea that somehow the object or being that no longer exists still possesses a "past" confuses the distinction these two words can convey. Once an object or being no longer exists it obviously has no present or future, similarly the object has no past. While it may be difficult to accept, a mountain that no longer exists has no past, present, or future for the simple reason that there is no such mountain. There is a current history of a mountain that once existed, but there is no mountain we can point to and describe the "past" of. This is far more than semantics. A person who lived a thousand years ago had a historic life that those who are alive can be conscious of, but the person no longer has a past that is their past, which they can be conscious of.

The English language lacks the words that would make it easy to convey the difference between a "history" set in the past that is the sum of all lifetimes, and a "past" that is unique to and dependent on the existence of an individual life. Perhaps humankind has avoided the initially discomfoting possibility of "finite pasts" by not distinguishing them from the infinite. Perhaps the majority simply do not accept the possibility of the perpetual annihilation of human beings.

There are many arguments that purport to counter this logic, including assertions that a person's life before physical death has "existential" meaning in and of itself, yet all the alternative arguments are set in the time before death, within the causal sequence of events that precede death. Every humanistic theory is based on the biophysics of existence before physical death. We believe that none of the arguments adequately address the period after death (perhaps with the possible exception suggested by modern physics that is discussed below), and therefore none answer the question of how a person who no longer exists can have a past, present, or future?

If death is the end of your existence, should you be frightened by the certainty of your destruction? If indeed you cease to exist, you need not fear death, for after your death you will

feel neither pain, nor pleasure, nor peace, nor torment. "You" will no longer exist, therefore "you" will feel nothing. The resulting void is just that, a complete and total void. There is nothing to fear, for there will be no one to experience anything negative. There is nothing to look forward to, for there will be no one to experience anything positive. The only way you can visualize what is usually called a "nihilistic" death is to picture yourself after death as being in the same state you were in before birth (of course you were not really in any state at all). Trying to project yourself into the void that precedes life helps you understand the void that may follow death. This ultimate void would in a single moment consume your past, present, and future. No matter what philosophers may tell us, such a fate, while it would offer no hope, would leave nothing to be feared.

Admittedly, our conclusions about physical death are totally opposite to our "common sense" understanding of life. Virtually everyone is certain, for example, that if they are eleven years old now, they have already experienced their tenth year of life, and nothing can take from them the past experience of being ten years old. It is this assumption, that our past somehow exists forever, that is at the heart of all humanistic belief systems. Indeed, belief in some kind of physical persistence of a human being's past is the only rational argument for the universal humanistic conclusion that even if physical death is the end, living a "good life" gives meaning and value to human existence. However there is a deep, deep, problem with the humanist's view.

"Humanistic" philosophers seem to accept that human consciousness is purely physical in nature, and acknowledge the end of consciousness at physical death. Yet almost all modern humanist philosophers tell us that a finite life can have meaning and value. The problem lies in failure to accept the rational and logical consequences for each human being if individual consciousness ceases to exist on the physical death of the mind and body. All of the humanist philosophers either ignore or misunderstand what the future holds for us after physical death if we are nothing more than physical beings.

Philosophers often speak of the void that would follow such a death as the abyss, the unknown, the approaching void, etc. All of these suggest that we are on a journey to a "place" which lies at the end of our physical lifetimes. If on our death we cease to exist, this idea that we are traveling to our ultimate destiny is false. What the philosophers are doing is giving substance to nothing. We are not traveling to an abyss, the void, or the unknown, for these words suggest that we are moving toward something. I recognize the seeming absurdity of the language, yet if on our death we cease to exist, then "nothing" totally consumes us.

This is the heart of the problem, we cannot in any way whatsoever understand or visualize "nothing". The moment we attempt to comprehend or visualize "nothing", the comprehension or visualization interjects something into "nothing", preventing us from reaching our goal. When we define "nothing" we give it the quality of being definable, a quality that can only be given to that which is more than "nothing". Nothing might be thought of as the total absence of physical reality, yet even this assigns a definition to the indefinable. The moment we think about "nothing" we make it an object that can be thought about, we make it an object that can only be more than "nothing". The only way we can answer the question "what is nothing?" is to answer it by not asking it, for if we ask the question we destroy the answer. Most people fail to recognize the fact that "something" simply cannot comprehend "nothing". If we are no more than physical

beings, and if “nothing” follows our physical death, then at the moment of our physical death, “nothing”.

What does science have to say about all this? We need to recognize that the very difficult conclusions we reach in this section are not necessarily supported by conventional interpretations of general relativity and quantum mechanics. The current understanding that human beings have of the physical universe is fundamentally incomplete. Early concepts of space and time as absolute metaphysical entities would seem to be fully consistent with our analysis. However, modern physics tells us that the universe is much more complex than it was once thought to be. At the start of the third millennium, it is generally accepted that we exist in some kind of four dimensional “space-time”. The mathematician Hermann Minkowski, who helped formalize the math of space-time, said “...henceforth, space by itself, and time by itself, have vanished into the merest shadows and only a kind of blend of the two exists in its own right.”

Space-time is essentially the history of the entire universe, containing every “event” that ever happens. A “world-line” is the history of an object / observer in “space-time”. Each point on the world-line of a human being is generally thought to be a real physical event that represents a unique sequential moment in the life of that individual, from birth to death. Conventional wisdom is that the world-line of a human being is the “human being”, so that human life is in some sense a permanent part of space-time. If this is so, perhaps we have a permanent physical past that is etched in the fabric of space-time.

To see why we do not believe that science provides us with a physical past, we need to look at three interpretations of cosmologic theories. The first possible interpretation, the one that we strongly favor, brings into question the very nature of space-time. At first glance, the concept of a permanent physical space-time seems to imply that human beings have a physical past, present, and future. Most people assume that the math of space-time describes a permanent physical reality that surrounds us, a very real, very physical, space-time in which we exist. This may not be the case.

The limited number of physicists who understand the incredibly difficult math, realize that the theory of general relativity tells us that the universe may be completely described without using a “fundamental temporal variable”, without even defining what we call “time”. The time we measure on a stopwatch that we use to clock a foot race is derived from comparing the motion of the runner from the starting line to the finish line with the motion of the hand rotating around the face of the watch. The time on the stopwatch is not, as Newton thought, a fundamental quantity in nature, rather it is a comparison of the motion of the person running down the track relative to the motion of the hands of the stopwatch. Therefore, we may be justified in concluding that “time” is derived from relative motion, but that relative motion does not necessarily require the passage of time. It may be true that “fundamental time” simply does not exist.

This is a shocking idea for human beings who are confronted with the ticking away of years, days, hours, and seconds. Even so, if you think about it, a year is nothing more than the relative motion of the earth going around the sun, a day is the relative motion of the earth rotating around its axis, an hour is a fraction of the motion we call a day measured by a quartz “moving” in a watch, a second is very close to the relative motion of a beating heart, etc. Certainly we

experience the passage of what we call "time", yet what we feel is not "fundamental", it is "derived" from the progression of a sequence of events. We don't expect to convince you in a few paragraphs that time is an illusion, it took years of reading and thought for us to reach that conclusion, but we do want you to recognize that there is a strong possibility that "fundamental" time does not exist. If this is a correct interpretation of general relativity, it can lead to the conclusion that there is no temporality of any kind associated with our universe (please see [Physics Meets Philosophy at the Planck Scale](#) for more details).

There are extremely serious objections to this line of thought. In its most popular forms, the other 20th century revolution in physics, quantum mechanics, incorporates a fundamental temporal variable. Some scientists believe that general relativity will be found to be incomplete, and that quantum mechanics tells us that time does in fact exist. Other physicists agree that the universe lacks a fundamental temporal variable by which the universe evolves, yet they also believe that in some very real sense the universe exhibits fundamental "temporality". None-the-less, there are a few respected physicists who believe that we should accept what general relativity is telling us, that there is no fundamental temporal variable in the universe, and find a way to modify quantum mechanics to eliminate both "time" and "temporality" from quantum theory. Given the success of general relativity in predicting experimental results, we strongly believe that this is the correct approach. We are convinced that if and when physicists discover a broad model that incorporates both relativity and quantum theories, what is usually called a theory of quantum gravity, it will not have any kind of fundamental temporal variable associated with it, and we will find that the universe is fundamentally "atemporal" in nature.

If we do in fact live in an "atemporal" universe, one extremely speculative result might be that physical events in our lives either exist, or do not exist. The statement that a point on a world-line exists in the universe may be false, true, false, with no sense that "false" is "before" or "after" true! If so, then it may be quite literally true that your tenth birthday does not exist, does exist, does not exist in the universe. Perhaps you believe that your tenth birthday is a permanent part of your past only because it is part of your current memories, not because it exists in some kind of permanent physical space-time. We need to emphasize that this is a very speculative idea that at the beginning of the third millennium is considered nothing more than science fiction by most, perhaps all, physicists.

If we live in an essentially "atemporal" universe, and there is no non-physical existence after death, we are convinced that physical death consumes each human being's physical past, present, and future. This is very difficult to understand and accept, yet the idea that there is no fundamental temporality, and that this fact leads to the annihilation of our physical past, intuitively appears to us to be the correct interpretation of our physical universe. When you finish reading this you may have questions about some of our conclusions, especially about the very complex relativistic and quantum science behind this part of our notes. You may want to look at the extensive links we provide on our website [Spacetime, Einstein's Relativity, Quantum Gravity, and the Existence of Time](#), and perhaps look at the comments accompanying our book that we release from time to time, where we try to present a broader picture of the foundation and logic that supports the conclusions.

The reason that we end up relying on intuition, and cannot be more certain that our conclusions are correct, is simply because no one knows what physics will look like if and when relativity and quantum theories are united. Furthermore, there is no way to tell how long it will take to find answers to the basic questions raised by modern physics. Indeed, it is quite possible that we will never know the answers to many of our most fundamental questions. We believe that the universe is essentially atemporal, and that physical death annihilates our physical (but not any non-physical) past, present, and future, but we may be wrong!

OK, let's say that you are unwilling to even think about "time" not existing, would the existence of "time" restore a meaningful physical past to your life? The second possibility we will look at is based on the fact that most popular interpretations of modern physics suggest that the physical existence of each human being somehow persists in space-time in the form of the individual's "world-line". Classical interpretations often say that an object is the entire world-line of that object, or that a human being is his or her entire world-line, but they do not really explain what is meant by this. They do, however, almost universally conclude that each event in a human being's life exists as an event in space-time, so that if we could observe the point on a world-line that is the tenth birthday of someone who is now eleven years old, we would see that person experiencing their tenth birthday. We would not see a "copy", or a "repeat", of the particular day, we would see the person's tenth birthday as it is occurring, period!

It would seem that this interpretation of space-time theories leaves us without tools for building a rational model of a universe that contains a "conscious" world-line that is the "me" reading this text. Rather it tells us that there is, and always will be, a set of unique "me's" that somehow exist in space-time at every single event on my world-line. We might want to say that I am the "sum" of all the points, yet the assertion that a human being is his or her entire world-line, from birth to death, does not appear to be consistent with the general consensus that every event along a world-line has a singular existence that cannot be preferred over any other event on that world-line.

Classic interpretations imply that each individual exists as discrete human consciousness in the billions of discrete events located at every point along that individual's world-line. Some physicists describe this by saying that there are many "now's", others say there are billions of approximate "isomorphs" of "me", many claim there are billions of other worlds in which various versions of "me" co-exist, etc. It seems reasonable to conclude that modern physics tells us that if time exists, literally billions of discrete, very real, versions of each of us occupy space-time!

This may seem like science fiction, yet surveys of theoretical physicists and cosmologists confirm that most believe we must adopt some form of many-worlds, multiple existence, theory (please see 100 Years of the Quantum). Remember, this is currently accepted as the most promising approach to the problems of space-time, and not merely a speculative idea. If there is a "me" that exists on my world-line for every event in my physical life, or if there really are an infinite number of parallel universes in which I exist, then there is no singular "me". Rather there are billions of isolated "me's" either lying along my world-line, or stuck somewhere in totally isolated universes.

If the scientists are correct, it would seem to be impossible to find meaning and value for a singular "me" in the collective existence of each of the billions of instances of individual consciousness, no single one of which is the "me" who can live a meaningful life. All of the popular interpretations of relativistic and quantum theories seem to lead us to the same metaphysical conclusion, if you do not have a single permanent existence, your life has no meaning and your choices make no difference to "you", simply because there is no single physical "you" that exists before or after physical death (please remember, we believe that life has meaning and value).

There is a third possibility, that the intuitive feeling human beings have that their physical past cannot change or be lost is based on some real, yet unknown, physical model of our universe. The intuitive feeling is very strong that our physical life makes a positive or negative contribution to human existence, and that our physical life is a permanent part of the physical universe. Perhaps there is some single physical consciousness that incorporates all of the events along our world-line, and that preserves our physical past, present, and future. We cannot rule out this possibility, if for no other reason than the fact that it is theoretically impossible to prove a negative. In other words, we might be able to prove that physical consciousness after death exists in the universe by observing it, but we can never prove that physical consciousness after death does not exist because we have not observed it (we will discuss this limitation in some detail a bit later).

The third possibility seems to require the existence of a physical consciousness that is not bound to events on a world-line. Yet it seems intuitively true that if consciousness of past events can be lost when memories fade or are damaged, then physical consciousness has not incorporated those past events into a permanent singular "me". Einstein only briefly addressed this matter when he said "An individual who should survive his physical death is also beyond my comprehension, nor do I wish it otherwise.... Enough for me the mystery of the eternity of life, and the inkling of the marvelous structure of reality, together with the single-hearted endeavor to comprehend a portion, be it ever so tiny, of the reason that manifests itself in nature."

It seems that if we are to believe that there may be some kind of singular physical (rather than non-physical) consciousness that survives physical death, then we must accept that there is some unique physical consciousness that is "me", that somehow incorporates all of the conscious events of my life, and that is not dependent on the continuing physical existence of my biologic body. While current interpretations of popular theories do not rule out the possibility of a perpetual individual physical consciousness, there is no known method that is both rational and realistic to construct a physical (as opposed to a non-physical) model that preserves the singular human physical consciousness of an individual after the physical death of that person. Modern theories suggest the possibility that multiple instances of a physical "me" exist in space-time, but they do not offer even a clue as to how to unite all of those instances into a single physical "me" whose consciousness spans space-time. Indeed, current interpretations of quantum superposition seem to deny the possibility of a "single" physical reality in which a unique "me" might exist.

I can visualize and accept a "non-physical consciousness" that survives physical death, yet I am unable to have any confidence in the existence of a singular "physical consciousness" that survives the physical death of a human being. I may be wrong, yet I can say that after many

years of thought I am convinced that any attempt to construct a model of permanent physical consciousness does far more damage to the centuries of accumulated scientific knowledge, than does the acceptance of the possibility that a permanent non-physical consciousness may exist.

We have concluded that no current, or reasonably foreseeable, rational theory provides us with a singular physical consciousness that continues to exist after physical death, so that a single physical "me" continues to exist after my death in my physical "past". We have said that if we do not have a singular physical or non-physical consciousness that continues to exist after physical death, then those who believe in nihilism are probably correct, and some type of "nihilistic" void awaits all of us. It may be a true void, like the void that preceded our birth, or it may be a very strange void where billions of "me" merely co-exist. Whatever physical form it might take, it would seem to satisfy the definition of a "meaningless" void.

A moment's comment on those who believe they may be able to physically perpetuate themselves through cryogenics, cloning, etc. If, we live in a constantly expanding universe, our universe will eventually return to a state of uniformly high entropy, so that the cosmos will become a hostile environment in which physical life cannot be sustained. If, on the other hand, theories that predict endless cycles of expansion and contraction of our universe are correct, nothing physical can survive beyond the next collapse of the universe a few billion years from today. While a physical end to all biologic creatures may seem absurdly far away, your great, great, great (to the 100th. power), grand-clone would find it frightfully real when the time came for their physical demise, a distant time from now which like all imaginable time is but a second in eternity. There is simply no cosmologic model that we know of that offers any hope for a perpetual, physical, human existence.

Even if in some unknown manner multiple clones could survive in an ever-expanding universe, the idea that they are perpetual extensions of their donor seems less than credible, perhaps so, perhaps not. Such a perpetual presence seems to be more like an endless path of meaningless individual moments than a continuous meaningful existence. Furthermore, if there is no life after death, it would make no difference if an individual (cloned or otherwise) continued to exist, or "died" in one hundred years or in one billion years, because "death" would annihilate the individual's past, present, and future.

If physical death annihilates all individual consciousness then there is no reason whatsoever to embrace cryogenics, cloning, strong artificial intelligence, or any other means of extending physical life. Since an individual's death would carry with it no possible consequence to that individual, there is no logical reason whatsoever for the living individual to avoid the "consequences" of death. If an individual no longer exists after death, that individual has no reason at all to feel anything positive, negative, or otherwise about death (or for that matter anything at all about life). Again please note, we do not believe that physical death annihilates individual consciousness, and we strongly believe that life does have meaning and value.

What should our response be to all of this? We strongly believe that there is absolutely no reason not to live for the possibility that life has meaning and value. We think we are right about the transitory nature of physical consciousness, but we may be wrong. If our conclusions are wrong, perhaps we do in fact have a physical consciousness that survives physical death. If we are

wrong, we may have a perpetual physical existence that gives meaning and value to our physical lives, even if there is no non-physical life after death. We will not pursue this possibility, yet you should recognize that it exists.

If we are right, if our physical consciousness does not survive physical death, our death may mark the end of our existence. Yet if our physical consciousness dies, it is still quite possible that we will not face a "nihilistic" death. Perhaps we have a non-physical consciousness that survives physical death, and that gives meaning and value to our lives. We will consider this possibility in more detail as we continue our search for a reason for living.

Beyond the human desire for meaning in life, we would suggest that the logical consequence of what philosophers call a nihilistic death, "requires" the search for alternatives to nihilism. Those who believe that the nihilistic void is approaching are, by the very nature of their humanity, required to search for something to believe in other than the void. While it appears to be impossible to scientifically prove that life has meaning and value, it is equally impossible to prove that life has no meaning and value. No matter what the person who believes that life is meaningless may believe to be true at any particular time in their life, the possibility always exists that he or she may eventually find true meaning and value in their life.

There is no reason to be a "nihilist", no reason to believe that life ends at death. If nihilism is correct, if life does end at death, it makes no difference whatsoever if we believe it is correct, or not. If we believe nihilism is correct, and it is correct, that does not alter the void that would follow death. If we believe nihilism is not correct, and it is correct, that does not alter the void that would follow death. If we do not believe anything at all about nihilism, and it is correct, that does not alter the void that would follow death. Yet if nihilism is not correct, belief and/or faith in that which offers a reason for living may well be essential to our existence. If because we believe nihilism is correct we accept the void, and we are wrong, then we have doomed ourselves. If we recognize that the humanistic belief that there is no life after death leads to the nihilistic conclusion that the "void" will consume past, present, and future, then to escape the quicksand of nihilistic time we must search for alternatives that provide a reason for living.

It is very important to recognize that nihilism can never lead to suicide, for nihilism tells us that if we do in fact live in a nihilistic world, nothing that happens in our lives, no matter how "badly" we may feel about it at the time, has any "real" consequence at all. It tells us that what we perceive to be the very worst events in our lives are no better, or worse, than any other events. I am absolutely convinced that the philosophical neutrality that nihilism demands, means that nihilism never suggests or supports suicide as an option for any human being.

Furthermore, since it is absolutely clear that we may not live in a nihilistic world, and that nihilism may be wrong, there can never be any reason to terminate our life, risk the negative consequences, and abandon the possible positive consequences of living a meaningful life. We are a small part of the whole. Unless the answer is revealed to us by the whole, we can never know during our physical lives what really happens when our physical life ends. Life may have physical or non-physical meaning and value that we do not, and perhaps cannot until our physical death, recognize and understand.

There is no reason at all to reject the possibility that each of us has some kind of permanent physical or non-physical consciousness. There is absolutely no logical reason whatsoever to reject the possibility that nihilism may be false! There is no reason whatsoever not to search for an alternative to nihilism, to explore the possibility of a permanent physical or non-physical consciousness, to search for a reason for living. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever not to live for the possibility, however remote you may believe it to be, that life has meaning and value. [Again, if you find yourself distressed or depressed by our conclusions please read the Note – Distress & Depression.]

Is That All There Is?

If it is true that your existence ends with physical death, does that mean that your life is meaningless? As we have said, the answer is probably (but not “certainly”) yes. Therefore, is it true that your life has no meaning? The answer is a qualified no. If we are somehow more than our physical bodies, if we can exist beyond and apart from those bodies, then perhaps each of us survives physical death and continues to exist, in some manner and form, beyond the grave. If you are, or you become through living, a unique individual who possesses the ability to engage in rational thought and exercise freedom of choice transcending biological processes of determinism, perhaps you have an existence beyond your physical mind and body, perhaps not.

Since the dawn of recorded history people have thought and written about existence beyond physical death. Some have suggested that extra sensory perception, premonitions, unexplained knowledge of past events, along with other similar and possibly real phenomena, are part of the world beyond death, perhaps so, perhaps not. Perhaps the unique being which each of us is, the present existence that makes your choices and your life yours alone, exists now and after your death in a realm beyond the physical, perhaps not. Perhaps that which you are survives like energy in a dimension coexistent with the physical world but beyond the constraints of space, motion, and time, perhaps not. Perhaps each of us continues to exist in a manner and fashion infinitely beyond our ability to imagine, let alone comprehend, perhaps not.

A great number of people have spent vast amounts of time and effort studying all manner of phenomena outside everyday experiences. Many, most, or even all "inexplicable" events may be explained by future generations of scientists. The most amazing phenomena are not the dramatic events often attributed to the "supernatural", events which could as easily as not be emotional illusions or the consequence of known or unknown physical laws. What are amazing to me are simple occurrences that defy probability. We have all experienced, and therefore witnessed, baffling events that leave one with a feeling that their explanation may lie outside the realm of natural science. For example, most of us have thought about someone we have not seen for years, only to bump into them a few minutes later. Even more amazing are instances that may occur when we are facing major events in our lives, when we are in some way confronted by someone or something that leads us toward a “better” choice. When faced with such occurrences, I have often found myself with an “intuitive” feeling that they are in some non-physical sense “planned”, perhaps so, perhaps not.

I have paid a great deal of attention to the kind of occurrences that are classified by scientists as "amazing coincidences". While most can be accepted as coincidental, some appear to be one in a

million events that happen with such regularity that the odds against them being merely coincidental are incredibly large. It is impossible for me, in good conscience, to dismiss them as being nothing more than random events. Many appear to be “objective” phenomena, well suited to empirical study, that statistically support the conclusion that they are not the result of chance.

I have little difficulty accepting that there are events that are in fact controlled by forces beyond our present knowledge. Indeed, I am convinced that there is a non-physical explanation for many events. If they are true phenomena, and not products of the mind, their very existence strongly suggests that there is a world which is quite real lying somewhere beyond normal human perception. A brief glance at, a fleeting contact with, what may be the world beyond the one in which we live gives a shocking reality to what we academically speculate about, or even faithfully believe in.

Though we may profess to believe in that which we cannot see, we may also find ourselves surprised when our beliefs appear to be true. Possible contact with a world beyond human perception gives us a startling realization that we may be eternally subject to forces absolutely beyond our control, and leaves us with a chilling or hopeful feeling (depending on your view of your prospects if eternity exists) that death will not be a simple, restful, eternal sleep. None-the-less, a belief that we may have glimpsed the world beyond, no matter how convincing at the moment, is diluted over time. The human mind's natural presumption is against out of the ordinary observations that, by definition, provide infrequent reinforcement of beliefs.

Of course, it may be true that "supernatural" events, though perhaps of great significance to the living, are nothing more than manifestations of physical and biological processes beyond our present ability to explain, similar to early civilization's attempts to explain through myths the phenomenon's of fire and lightening. If so they have no significance at all to the question of our existence after physical death. Yet it may be that they are images created by the overlapping of the current world and a world you will find yourself in after death.

There is no present answer to the questions posed by what many perceive to be “metaphysical” events. Our discussion deals with what the meaning and purpose of life is. As we continue you will see that whether or not anyone has in fact witnessed supernatural phenomena originating from a world beyond the grave, though a question which peaks curiosity, is not an essential, or perhaps even an important, one. You will see that we don't need to look for metaphysical events in our lives to understand what life is all about. The significance of such events is beyond the scope of these notes and is simply not necessary to our discussion.

We will see that even if no one ever has had, or ever will have, any contact in this world with a world beyond the grave, it would not mean that such a world does not exist. We will explore in detail the possibility that we may continue to exist after death. At this point we ask that you keep an open mind about life after death. For now, please accept the possibility, however remote you may feel it is, that in some manner and fashion we continue to exist after our physical death.

The Search For Truth

If a scientist, philosopher, or anyone else tells you something is true, and in fact it is not true, it is not true. To say something is true does not make it true. Even though you are told something is true, if it is not true it is simply not true. On the other hand, if something is true it is true, even if you are told or believe that it is not.

If something is true or false, it is true or false whether we believe it to be true or false, or have not thought about its truth at all. If we believe a lamp is on a table, whether we have any evidence it is or not, and it is in fact on the table, then what we believe to be true is true. If we cannot determine whether or not the lamp is on the table, that does not change the actual position of the lamp. Even though without evidence we cannot prove a lamp is on a table, if it is on the table it is there and our belief is true.

Just because we cannot prove something is true does not in any way mean it is not true. Because we cannot prove, or disprove, we continue to exist after the death of our bodies does not mean that we do not continue to exist, or that we do. If we continue to exist after our physical death, then we continue to exist, and if we do not, then we do not.

If there is no one in a forest to hear a tree fall, does the sound of the tree falling really exist? If there is no one to see a tree fall, does it really fall at all? "Does an event occur if there are no observers?" is a valid question that perhaps can be answered "yes" only if the observer not only sees the event, but also continues to exist forever beyond the time of the event. In other words, if only inanimate objects surround an event such as the turning on of a lamp, perhaps it can be said no event has occurred since nothing has been seen, heard, etc., to change. Similarly, if a living observer witnesses an event but at some later date the observer ceases to exist, what value was the observation? Of course the argument can be made that seen or not seen photons stream from a light when it is turned on. Furthermore, it can be suggested that once seen or heard an event has "actualized". Much depends on how you define "event", but underlying the question is a troublesome perception that goes beyond semantics, a feeling that a world without permanent observers lacks anything similar to what we call "reality".

Even though we disagree, some philosophers have moved toward the view that "language" is the unique factor which gives humans the ability to think thoughts, and that language is the only thing that distinguishes us from animals. They suggest that using language, our consciousness assigns the concepts of true and false to the things and events that surround us. Some of them believe that "truth" has no meaning outside the human mind, and, therefore, in a very real sense, that "truth" does not exist as an independent reality.

I am not uncomfortable with the idea that in an inanimate universe "truth" may not exist, and therefore there must be an observer for "truth" to have meaning. However I am very uncomfortable with the suggestion that where a permanent observer does exist, "truth" is merely a creation of that observer's consciousness. If we survive the grave, we may well have a perpetual consciousness that can observe and remember the "truths" which surround us. Whether or not a lamp has been observed to be on a table, if the lamp is physically sitting on a table the very existence of permanent observers who could observe the lamp may give independent meaning to the statement that it is "true" that the lamp is on the table, perhaps so, perhaps not. If memories of human events die with each person, then events themselves become little more than

transient observations made by the living. Yet if we survive the grave, it would seem that we would have a continuing consciousness that recognizes a real and fundamental difference between that which is "true" and that which is "false". For now, please accept the possibility that some things are either fundamentally "true", or not.

If we want to consider in greater detail the possibility of our continued existence after the death of our bodies, we need to be able to make statements we can believe to be true. In our quest to find some meaning in life, we must develop some method of determining "truths" which we can have a fair degree of confidence in. To do so we first need to understand what it means to be able to "prove" something, scientifically or otherwise.

Over the centuries the quest for truth has been refined into the process of scientific analysis. A brief summary of what has come to be known as the scientific method is helpful. Scientists observe what they want to study and record properties they believe to be relevant to their research. While some may have preconceived notions of what they will find, others begin the process of experimentation and observation without any idea what, if anything, they will discover. Even though they may believe they will achieve a certain result, scientists who do not approach every experiment with open minds are not scientists at all.

After gathering what they consider to be enough information about an object or event, scientists sit back, study the data, and try to combine and organize the information to discover a pattern running through it. They look for a model that not only describes what they currently observe, but that also perfectly matches past observations. The resulting descriptions of the world around them are known as theories or theorems. These in turn can be used to predict what will happen in the future under the same or similar circumstances.

Efforts to formulate theorems that describe observations would be in vain if the universe was made up of random events, occurring without reason or order, for then no one could say what will happen next. Of course, that appears not to be the case, as our universe seems to behave in a more or less ordered manner. As we have studied the cosmos in more and more detail, it seems to be true that (what one scientist called his "gut feeling") all physical objects comprised of matter and energy (which may or may not include all aspects of human "consciousness"), from the tiniest atomic particle to the largest system, behave according to some fixed set of laws. These laws can be thought of as if-then statements, which describe what will happen if a certain event occurs. For example, one of the well-known results of the law of gravity is that IF an apple comes loose from the branch of a tree, THEN it will fall to earth.

For several reasons I regret using simplistic examples to make a point. Because of their simplistic nature, they tend to lessen the importance of the point being made. They narrow the reader's focus from the broad, general truth of a statement to a specific, small part of the whole. Simple examples tend to be incredibly inadequate when used to illustrate complex feelings, beliefs, ideas, etc. Some people feel they are being talked down to, or think they already understand what is being said. They risk missing the deep significance that often hides within the example. On the other hand, simple examples can be used to bring a point quickly home, allowing us to bypass a good bit of background discussion and to explore at once concepts which are best understood when drawn rapidly and simultaneously into the mind. The dangers of

simplistic examples can only be overcome by the reader who is aware of the shortcomings, and is willing to expand in their mind the examples so that the "profound" will not be misunderstood to be "simple".

Back to gravity and the falling apple. The law itself basically states that objects exert a force on each other that attracts them toward one another, the strength of the attraction being related to their masses and the distance between them. The fundamental law of gravity was described by Isaac Newton after he observed that objects that are dropped fall toward earth. By repeating his experiment over and over again, by dropping object after object, Newton gained confidence what he theorized to be true was true, objects attract each other with a strength directly proportional to their masses and inversely proportional to the distance between them.

Each successful test of Newton's theory of gravity made scientists increasingly confident the theorem was correct. Why should repeated successes, i.e. more and more apples falling off trees, increase the confidence of the scientists? Beyond the "common sense" feeling that repeated successes increase confidence in success, is there some "scientific" reason to be optimistic?

Enter the world of statistics. Mathematicians have long recognized that the larger the sample that is taken from a group of items, the better able they are to predict what individual items are like in the group. The larger the sample the more confident they can be that a "strange" or uncharacteristic item will not be found. This is true due to the fundamental nature of the mathematics behind statistical inference. It is true no matter what the items being sampled are, so long as the sample is not biased.

For example, if you randomly sample 500 apples out of a box containing 100,000 thoroughly mixed apples, and find not a single rotten one, a mathematician can tell you with a great degree of confidence what the chances are that none of the 100,000 apples is rotten. If you sample 1000 apples out of the 100,000, he or she can be more certain. After inspecting 10,000 apples, he or she can be even more certain. If 5 rotten apples are found in a sample of 500, or 45 in a sample of 1000 the mathematician can tell you how many rotten apples you are likely to find among the 100,000 apples. No matter what is in the box, whether it is 100,000 apples, 100,000 pencils, 100,000 transistors, 100,000 anything, so long as the items are uniformly mixed, anyone can tell by drawing a random sample how many of the items in the box are likely to have one or more traits in common (i.e. color, size, shape, etc.). The bigger the sample, the more accurate the prediction and the more confident the predictor. (please see StatSoft Statistics – Electronic TextBook)

It should be emphasized that the predictions are accurate not because of the nature of that which is being sampled, but because the mathematical relationship between the number of samples and the number of underlying items being sampled is fixed and predictable. If you draw at random four pencils from a jar containing 100 pencils, three are white, one is red, there is a certain probability that the jar contains 75% white pencils and 25% red pencils. If you draw four golf balls from a jar containing 100 golf balls, three are white, one is red, the same probability exists the jar contains 75% white golf balls and 25% red golf balls.

If the apples in our apple barrel were not uniformly mixed, and/or the sample was drawn in some organized pattern, we might get only good apples, or at least a higher number of good apples than we would otherwise. The sample would be unrepresentative of the contents of the box and useless to the mathematician. It is very, very important to realize if we take as our sample 99,999 out of 100,000 apples and find not even a single rotten one, we can be incredibly sure we are right when we predict the one apple left in the box is not rotten. None-the-less when we examine the one remaining apple it may in fact be rotten!!!!

A Law Is A Law Until It Is No Longer A Law

What we are building up to is the fact that the law of gravity is called a "law" because, in billions and billions of observations, not once has any documented event occurred where two objects did not attract each other in precisely the way predicted (we now know that gravity may not behave exactly as Newton thought, but like Newton predicted, objects do attract one another in the sense that the theory of general relativity tells us that the gravitational effect "moves" objects toward one another). We can say with an absolutely incredible degree of statistical certainty that the gravitational "force" between two objects will always cause them to be attracted toward one another. At this point in time there is probably less than one chance in $1,000,000,000,000,000,000 \times 10$ raised to the $1,000,000,000,000,000$ th power that gravity will not act essentially as expected. Yet, despite the incredible certainty of gravity, we do not and cannot know whether it is or is not possible for one contrary event to occur, and thus for the law of gravity to be proven wrong!

I am not suggesting the law of gravity is incorrect and that an event whereby it is proven wrong will ever occur. In fact I would be surprised if any of the basic scientific laws of the universe are fundamentally wrong. What I am saying is no matter how many times something has been observed to be true, no matter how incredibly unlikely it is an unexpected event will occur, we have no way of knowing if such an event is possible or impossible! If the unexpected event is not possible, it will never occur, and it will never be observed. If the event is possible, and if it does occur, then it has happened, period.

We must remember it is not the "law" which makes objects behave in a certain way, fundamental forces far beyond human comprehension do that. Rather the law describes the behavior and remains valid and true only until a single unexpected observation proves it wrong. Actually the law remains only apparently valid and true, if it is later proven wrong its former truth was an illusion. The law was in fact always false. "Modifying" a theory to better fit the observations does not help render the original theory true, rather it creates a new theory that is itself either true or false. Since scientific theories are tested by observation, they are true if and only if each and every event they describe and predict, from the beginning of the universe to the end, in fact occurs exactly as expected. Theories, no matter how solid they might seem, must be discarded as false the very first time they fail to describe real events.

Science is based on observation, formulation of theories, and more observation. To observe necessarily requires the ability to perceive - to sense, feel, smell, touch, taste, see, hear. Early humans used all their senses to explore the world around them. When human senses proved inadequate, they devised better and better tools and instruments to extend their range.

Microscopes and telescopes to expand vision, stethoscopes and amplifiers to increase hearing, plus thousands of other sensitive devices to enhance the senses.

The catalog of devices used to expand our human senses is enormous and growing by the minute, yet all the instruments of humankind can do no more than extend the reach of humans into the universe of which they and their instruments are a part. We know of three spatial dimensions, height, width, depth, and a fourth dimension, time (which may also prove to be spatial in nature). Space (height, width, depth), and “time” all exist together as space-time and cannot exist alone. Is there a fifth, a sixth, a seventh, an eighth dimension? No one knows, for if they exist they appear to be separate and beyond human ability to sense, measure, and thus scientifically prove.

Does that mean those dimensions do not exist, the answer is no. Mathematicians and physicists use formulas to describe sub-atomic phenomena (e.g. - string theory) that can be interpreted as happening in multidimensional space. If a fifth dimension exists, it exists. If a fifth dimension does not exist, it does not exist. This is true regardless whether we can, or never can, observe that dimension and, of course, is true for any sixth dimension, seventh dimension, eighth dimension, etc. It is important to realize that no matter how many dimensions are eventually observed, one or more additional dimensions may or may not exist beyond human ability to observe.

Many of you are saying to yourselves it is one thing to say that a dimension beyond human ability to observe may exist, but an entirely different thing to say that one probably does. You are right. Most of you will go on to say it is highly improbable, maybe less than one chance in a trillion, that even one more dimension exists beyond the observable number of dimensions, however many that may eventually prove to be. If you think that, you are wrong. To be able to statistically predict the likelihood of an event happening we must first observe to see how often the event occurs during a given period of time. If we cannot observe the event when it occurs, we cannot determine how often it happens (or conversely, does not happen) and we cannot predict the likelihood of the event.

One problem with recognizing the limitations of statistical analysis is understanding the difference between not observing an event where the event watched for can be observed, and not observing an event where the event cannot be observed because it is beyond human ability to sense. The first, not observing an event which could be seen, leads to the statistically valid conclusion that the event is unlikely to occur. The second, not observing an event which is beyond human ability to perceive, cannot lead to any conclusion at all about the reality of that event. Yet it appears to be human nature to assume that things which have never been observed do not exist, or at best are highly unlikely to exist.

If something exists beyond human perception it will never be observed during our physical lifetimes. If you cannot measure something because it is beyond human perception you cannot prove it exists, on the other hand you cannot prove that it does not exist! More importantly, you cannot say that it is statistically likely or unlikely that it exists. You simply cannot say anything objective at all about that which is beyond human ability to observe.

It is very, very important to realize that it is absolutely impossible to say that it is either likely or unlikely something exists beyond human observation. We simply cannot determine in any way the probability that something exists, or does not exist, beyond our observable universe. To understand the significance of this often overlooked statement is to understand that we have no idea what, if anything, lies beyond our cognitive boundaries.

A moment's thought should bring the realization that this absolute limit of statistics and science renders all "scientific proof", as well as subjective feelings, that nothing exists beyond our perception into feeble "philosophic arguments". Despite what science might claim to have "proven", and despite what we might "feel", about what lies beyond our ability to observe, we cannot say anything objective about that which is beyond human perception. We may create mathematical models of what should lie somewhere just beyond observation, yet without a means of testing these projections they can never be more than idle speculation. We simply cannot say that it is likely, or not likely, that a "world" or "worlds" exist beyond the physical world in which we live. From an analytical standpoint anything, or nothing, may exist beyond human cognition.

Human beings are limited to observing the effects of fundamental forces on matter and energy, and must draw conclusions based only on such observations. We can never "view" the forces themselves, forces whose metaphysical existence and purpose transcend human observation and comprehension. One of the consequences of being only a small part of the universe in which we live is the absolute fact that, unless revealed to us by the whole, we can never know if something or someone exists beyond the limits of our senses. No one, not you nor I nor the smartest person on earth can determine whether or not anything exists beyond that which we can observe. It follows that we cannot know if someone or something beyond our ability to perceive can and will alter the laws which govern our world.

The significance of the continued possibility that an unexpected event will occur to disprove even the best of theories, and the very fact such a possibility will always exist, renders it impossible to "prove" anything to be absolutely true or false. Since even the most incredibly supported "laws" are always subject to being disproved by the happening of a single contrary event, all laws and theorems and common sense proofs are subject to being disproved. Fundamental precepts that apples fall, water flows, fire burns, may all be disproved by future events.

Our limitations not only prevent us from exploring that which is beyond human perception, but also add to all human observations a degree of uncertainty that cannot be overcome. We can never say with total certainty that anything is true, or for that matter, untrue. In this age of science it is hard for those who have not studied the scientific method in its most intricate details to understand that, because it is a tool of human beings, it is necessarily limited in its application by the limits of human comprehension and understanding.

It is even harder to accept that, since we are only a part of the whole universe, we can never determine by ourselves what the entire universe is like. A part of something never knows what the whole is like unless the whole makes itself known to the part. We can never know what is true unless the truth is revealed to us. Being a part of the whole means that every law we

construct must be built from unprovable assumptions, assumptions that may or may not hold true in the future. We can never know if something or someone outside our perception, perhaps greater than the whole, will alter all or part of what we observe, rendering untrue in an instant the very best of our proofs.

Of course, if underlying forces do exist, are not changed, and require the predicted behavior, then the laws never can and never will be disproved. Apples will fall, water will flow, fire will burn, etc. However, that does not alter the fact that it is, and always will be, beyond human ability to "prove" anything. There is absolutely no way human beings can determine if fundamental forces exist that will never change. We simply cannot determine if it is possible, or if it is not possible, for a contrary event to occur. We can never be certain that contrary events will not happen, we can never prove that anything is absolutely "true".

You Can't Believe Your Eyes

We must be sure of observations that are within the bounds of human perception, and skeptical if what we observe appears to be opposite to that which is predicted. Yet we must also be willing to recognize and accept valid experimental data that disproves popular theories. Scientists have declared many theories to be true and elevated them to the status of "law", only to discover that future observations, often more accurate than the first, proved them wrong. There are millions of examples of these errors. Perhaps the most famous was the early contention that the earth was flat, a scientific "fact" based on observations that appeared sound to early scholars, which should not be so surprising to those of us who live in hilly country without a visible horizon. What all of us, including scientists, must be aware of is the ease in which we convert our theories into laws. Even if we believe our minds are open, most of us grab onto favorite theories and assumptions. We think of, and talk about, them as though there is no doubt they are true.

We should take a minute to discuss the potentially "seductive" nature of misinterpreted or misused "scientific proof". A portion of my high school biology text described the propulsion method of certain one-cell microscopic animals (protozoa) through water by declaring they waved a tail like projection back and forth. The book had been careful to label many new ideas as theories, but stated this particular description in absolute terms since these one-celled animals had been observed for many, many years always moving in exactly the same way. Anyone reading the text would believe, as scientists and everyone else did, that there was absolutely no question how the animals got around.

As I was watching television almost ten years later I was surprised to hear of an accidental discovery by a scientist looking at some protozoa. Trying to hold one still under a microscope he held down the tail with a needle. Instead of the body of the animal thrashing back and forth as it should have, he observed it to be spinning around the tail. The tail was attached to the body by what was in effect a small rotating joint, which acted like an electric motor spinning a propeller (please see article on motility of bacteria). Looking more closely, the scientist discovered the tail was in fact shaped like a corkscrew. Because the microscopic view had always been two dimensional, rather than three, the corkscrew motion looked down on from above had appeared to be that of a wave. Since it was common to find waving tails in larger animals, and since no one had predicted, let alone observed, a 360 degree rotating joint, the thoughts and conclusions

of generations of scientists had been colored by conscious and subconscious assumptions. What had been accepted as true turned out to be false. But remember, what was found to be true had in fact always been true.

Similarly, I remember reading an article by a learned scientist who was upset when a well-accepted theory was challenged. He noted that of course it was a theory, just as all scientific laws are really theories, but he then stated that the particular theory was so well documented it was obviously true. It was and is not "obviously true" for, as we have seen, no theory can be said to be unquestionably true.

The theory was the theory of evolution. Darwin's theory has become for many the shining example of humankind's ability to pull itself out of the dark ages, and thus is cloaked in an emotional blanket that associates all criticism of it with attacks on science. To the religious fundamentalist evolution is a tool atheists use to infiltrate the minds of children. To the humanistic scientist, evolution is a symbol of the triumph of scientific reasoning over myth. To most people, perhaps, it is simply a more or less correct method of describing the seemingly natural progression of things.

I have little trouble with the idea of either accepting or rejecting evolution, for I can take it or leave it as a part of the physical explanation of the universe which neither conflicts with, nor supports, philosophy, religion, or science. I would be extraordinarily surprised if the theory of evolution, in some form or another, is not essentially correct. What is troublesome is that challenges to evolution, and other theories scientists adopt as scientifically "self-evident", are often viewed as a return to the "irrationality" that preceded science. As such they are rejected without consideration as unworthy intrusions into pure science, which will go away if ignored.

The instant reaction many readers have when they see the word "evolution" illustrates my point. Many scientists simply will not talk about anything that upsets their idea of reality, yet all theories do just that. When any theory is first proposed, it is by its very nature an extension of humankind's knowledge (whether such knowledge is illusory or not), and as such goes beyond the then accepted view of the world. So long as such extensions are orderly and slow there is no problem, but when they leap ahead into the future they become the immediate concern of scientists who wish to keep science "pure". There is a strong presumption that something that has not been proven is somehow less than true. To many people the unproved is not simply unproven, but is "fantastic" and worthy only of the title "science fiction".

Thus despite professed neutrality on the untested, many scientists have made it clear they are ready to label as absurd that which is significantly outside common experience and which has not been subjected to empirical scrutiny. If popular theories do not withstand future scientific challenges, recognition of their weakness will be slow to come, and acceptance of more exotic alternatives will be resisted with cries that the alternate theories are irrational myths. One should feel uneasy that correct theories, which are not subject to easy testing, might be dismissed as absurd. If something is currently "unproved" it may well be rejected by scientists as an impossibility, no one beyond the person postulating the theorem may dare dream of its truth.

As we have already noted, in addition to rejecting that which may be proved in the future, many scientists are equally willing to reject as an impossibility the existence of that which is beyond human perception, and thus "unprovable". No matter what we may think, or intuitively "feel", we absolutely cannot say anything objective at all about the "unprovable". The as of yet "unproved", as well as the "unprovable", may, or may not, be "true".

We should note one type of statement, the definition, which can be viewed as an irrefutable truth. By definition, water "boils" at 100 degrees Celsius. You can always define something to be what you want it to be, yet no matter how you define an event you will not alter the physical reality that makes up the event. Water "boils" at 100 degrees because we have defined what water does at that temperature to be "boiling". The word "boiling" is nothing more than a description of what happens at a given temperature. As a definition it is a label, which has nothing to say about the physical laws that affect the water.

Nothing assures us water will continue to act like it does when it gets to 100 degrees. If in the future the behavior of water changes, scientists must either continue to label the new activity as "boiling" by broadening the meaning of the word, or must coin a new word to describe the changed state. If water would solidify instead of vaporizing, scientists could continue to define the new behavior as "boiling" and no one could say they were wrong. Yet the new state would be totally opposite to the old, only the name would remain the same. Fortunately most observers recognize a responsibility not to use language to define away challenges to their beliefs, therefore they create new words to label new events. The thing to remember is that definitions do not explain or alter the underlying reality.

Reality Is Unreal

We know science cannot tell us anything about the world beyond our perception. What then can it tell us about the reality that surrounds us? Is it able to give us a sturdy foundation on which to build our lives? Can it answer our daily questions? We will explore a bit of modern physics to see just how stable, or unstable, science really is. The information in this section is based on generally accepted theories at the time of writing, please note that by the time you read this book these theories may have been replaced by equally exotic scientific descriptions of reality. No matter what millennium you live in, you will be able to discover and recognize the absolute limits of science.

If we are to accept our observations of falling apples as proof of the law of gravity we must first assume several things, for instance, that our eyes accurately perceive the motion of the apple, that our ruler accurately measures the distance the apple travels, and that our watch correctly records the time it takes for it to drop. If confronted with the question "does the ruler you are using shrink and grow if you look at it while moving at different speeds?", most of us would laugh and say to ourselves of course it doesn't, a fixed length is what makes a ruler a ruler. We would think the person asking the question would have us questioning whether the apple is real.

Indeed I would have you question all "scientific facts", for a scientist named Einstein shook the assumptions about distance, time, and space that scientists had relied on for thousands of years.

In his theory of relativity he "proved" the length measured on a "perfect" ruler and the time measured on a "perfect" clock vary according to the relative motion of one object to another.

Because the change in length and time is unbelievably small where relative speeds are slow, as in the case of a falling apple observed by an earthbound viewer, we can ignore the affect of relativity on everyday life. None-the-less the effects are real and sensitive instruments have confirmed them. Because our eyes cannot measure any difference does not alter the effect. The affect on a ruler becomes so great when relative speeds approach the speed of light that what was measured to be a foot would actually become a millionth of a millionth of a millionth of an inch.

Time is also affected by relative motion. If an identical twin could travel to another planet and back in a spaceship that flies at speeds approaching the speed of light, on return to Earth the space traveler would find that he or she had aged much less than his or her sibling. Perhaps the astronaut who left at age fifteen would be only twenty years old when he or she returned, while the earthbound twin would be ninety! This is not science fiction, the radical results predicted by relativity have been confirmed by countless experiments, including experiments where atomic clocks placed in jet planes ran slower than their earthbound counterparts! (please see Tic Toc Atomic Clock and the Twin Paradox)

Here is another example of an everyday "fact" taken for granted as being absolutely true. What is the shortest distance between two points? Without hesitation the answer for many, many years was "a straight line". The theory of relativity tells us the universe may be shaped like a piecrust with bumps and valleys. Thus the shortest distance between any two points in the universe, whether it is between towns on earth or stars in space, must be drawn on the surface of the lumpy crust (the area outside the crust is outside the universe and does not exist) and, therefore, must be slightly curved! The curvature is so infinitesimally small it cannot be easily observed, none-the-less the shortest distance between two points may be a slightly curved line!

Over the last few decades, some of the things which have been discovered are that energy and matter are different forms of the same thing (energy = mass times the speed of light squared); the speed of light is constant and nothing can go faster than that speed; as matter approaches the speed of light it becomes infinitely massive and shrinks in its direction of motion to become infinitely small; and at the sub-atomic level matter is neither a particle nor a wave but is incomprehensibly both. There are several excellent books written for non-scientists that explain relativity and other topics in modern physics (please see our online guide with links to the best university and other websites available for information on Spacetime, Einstein's Relativity, Quantum Gravity, and the Existence of Time.)

Another foundation of modern science, quantum physics, appears to offer a description of reality that is radically different from the one relativity gives us. Laws that operate at the subatomic "quantum" level provide probabilities of observing one of many possible results instead of giving a single observable solution to a problem. Quantum mechanics is a relatively new branch of science developed to explain why subatomic particles do not behave according to the Newtonian and relativistic laws that describe the behavior of "normal" size objects (please see Quantum Mechanics FAQ).

Just prior to the time subatomic particles and events were first measured, physicists had declared that, with very minor exceptions, all the fundamental forces and laws of the universe had been discovered and described. When scientists started to apply the traditional laws of physics to nuclear reactions they were literally amazed to find that the laws did not work! The search was on for a way to modify Newton's and Einstein's laws to explain the new phenomena. At the time no one knew the explanations would shake the very foundations of western knowledge.

Light is made up of energy in the form of "photons" which have mass (in motion) and which behave like particles, SOME OF THE TIME. The rest of the time photons behave like waves of energy, similar to ocean waves. If you will think about an ocean wave you will realize water making up the wave simply moves up and down, not forward. Only the wave itself moves forward. Thus if a boat is sitting a mile from shore, each wave will cause it to rise and fall, but will do little to move it toward shore. The boat will move a bit as each successive wave exerts a slight pushing force in the direction of the shore, but the boat won't be carried to shore by any one wave as the wave itself sweeps toward land. The vast majority of the water is simply moving up and down, while only the wave moves forward.

The problem occurs when you try to measure photons using different tests. Some tests detect "particles" of light hitting targets while other tests detect "wave" interference when light passes through narrow slits. Back to the ocean example, when two ocean waves meet they either cancel each other if the trough of one overlaps the crest of the other, OR they reinforce each other when the crest of one joins the crest of the other, forming a single doubly big wave (or any combination in-between can occur). When two waves interact they are said to be interfering with each other.

The problem is a particle CANNOT act like a wave and a wave CANNOT act like a particle, yet photons act like both! The solution of modern physics to this apparently unsolvable problem is to say that photons are neither waves nor particles until they are measured, and that the measurement itself determines the nature of the photon. In other words, it is the measurement of the event that determines the nature of the event.

To some degree this phenomena can be said to express hidden problems with what reality really is. In a sense physics is not able to describe the "reality" of an individual photon since it appears to have two inconsistent, coexistent, yet separate, natures. To the extent the point at which a photon is measured (known as the collapse of the wavefunction) can be considered an "event", an unsolved dilemma occurs in determining when the event "actualizes". If light is both a wave and a particle until measured, is it "truly" a wave (when measured as a wave by an interference experiment) at the point it interferes with itself, or at the point it strikes a photographic plate, or at the time the film is developed, or at the point a human observes the final picture, etc.? The answer is simply not known.

One of the greatest philosophical shocks of this century came in the form of the Heisenberg uncertainty principal. As far as many philosophers were concerned the last straw was when, to help explain the observed phenomena, Heisenberg noted that if you measure the momentum of one of the particles ("momentum" is velocity, which is speed in a given direction, times mass) that make up an atom you must in some way affect its position. For example, if you measure the

momentum (or velocity, the uncertainty principal is equally true for both momentum and velocity) of a subatomic particle by "observing" it move over a given distance, the observation alters its position in some unpredictable manner. Similarly, if you measure position you must alter momentum, thus at any given moment you CAN NEVER measure both the exact momentum and exact position of a subatomic particle. The more precise you are in measuring momentum, the less precise you will be about position, and vice versa. The problem is actually more than a problem of measurement, to be more accurate, the wave function of a subatomic particle (which describes the particle at the quantum level) that has not been "observed" is precisely determined (without using probabilities) by a formula known as Schrodinger's wave equation. However, the very moment you attempt to measure the momentum or position of the particle, the wave function collapses, introducing probabilities into the equation, and the exact momentum and position of the particle CANNOT be determined.

Heisenberg's theory can be interpreted as supporting the proposition that at the quantum level the very concepts of momentum and position have no real meaning. At the level of measured observation, modern physics can tell you how many particles in a group of particles have certain momentums and positions, and how many have other momentums and positions, but physicists CANNOT tell you what the momentum and position of any one particle is. This failure is far more than just some inability to measure momentum and position, it is due to the fact that it is fundamentally uncertain what the momentum and position of any single observed particle is! A single particle when measured simply does not have position and momentum in any normal sense of the words, but members of a group do, and the probability of x number having x momentum and x,y,z position can be precisely computed!

One interpretation (there are others) of this finding is that nature appears to determine the behavior of its "particles" by a flip of a coin. Einstein spent the latter part of his life attempting to disprove this disturbing idea, it flew against his concept of the universe and prompted him to say, "My God does not throw dice". Yet he was unable to disprove quantum theory in general, and the uncertainty principal in particular, both of which have correctly predicted every subatomic event that they have been tested against!

To emphasize the significance of the uncertainty principal remember it says that the uncertainty about momentum and position is not due to limitations on humankind's ability to make measurements, but rather is based on the apparent fact that the momentum and position of an individual particle is fundamentally uncertain. Of course, future physicists may find an underlying set of rules that can be used to predict the behavior of individual particles, or may discover a fundamental unified law which is consistent with the observed behavior. Einstein's discomfort may well have been the result of human limitations on his understanding of God. Even though many questions remain unanswered, repudiation of the uncertainty principal, however comforting it would be to philosophers, seems uncertain at best.

One current theory, which we mentioned earlier, that is popular among cosmologists and that would eliminate the uncertainty, shows just how confusing and exotic the universe may be. The truly wild (and from some scientists' points of view, virtually unbelievable) "many-worlds theory", suggests that every time an event occurs which has a possible required alternative, the universe splits into two identical parts, except that in one universe one alternative occurs, while

in the other the other alternative occurs. According to this theory (or at least to the most popular interpretations of it), there are potentially an infinite number of identical, except for the required alternatives, versions of each of us living simultaneously in different worlds. Uncertainty is eliminated because every alternative is guaranteed to occur. Rather than being a model of reality, this idea may be a product of human limitations.

If you want some more disturbing news I can give it to you. There is a controversial extension of quantum physics that deals with the problem of "locality". Components of atoms have a property called "spin". Spin is one of the fundamental quantities in the universe that must, and we do mean must, be conserved. For each particle that possesses positive spin, there MUST exist a particle with negative spin. When two such particles fly off in different directions from an atom, they always have opposite spin.

So far, no problems. We can "entangle" the particles and change the spin of one of them. The very instant we do so the other particle's spin changes, no matter what the distance is that separates them! Physicists, who accept that a problem exists, are at a loss to explain how a particle in a different location without any means of communication knows what another particle's spin is. It is a mystery how one particle knows to change spin at the very instant the spin of the other particle is altered (preliminary experiments seem to confirm the phenomena).

Einstein believed that any "rational", in the sense of "objective", description of nature is incomplete unless it is both a local and realistic theory. A theory is "realistic" if a particle has "intrinsic" properties that exist even before they are measured. A theory is "local" if measuring the properties of one particle cannot affect the properties of another, physically separated particle, in a length of time that would require "communication" between the particles that is faster than the speed of light. Yet quantum "entanglement" of spatially separated particles may require that realism, or locality, or both, be violated!

One highly speculative explanation of entanglement eliminates the normal assumption of "locality", the assumption that events occur at one specific location in the space-time continuum. If it is possible to have a rational description of the universe without a local theory, then you can have events that appear to be occurring in different locations actually occurring in the same place. Thus, no matter how far apart they may seem to be, two particles could know each other's spin because they are, in some as yet unexplained manner, in the same "location". Perhaps the two particles occupy the same position, or contiguous positions, in some unknown dimension where there is no such thing as separation. Speculation about the significance of lack of locality is really unproductive, except to note that lack of locality could help explain premonitions and extrasensory events.

Other complex examples of conflicts with accepted concepts of reality, truth, and classical philosophy and logic, are found within the fascinating, unsettling, discoveries of modern physics. We are left with fundamental paradoxes, the solutions to which are totally unknown. Indeed, despite what we are told by many scientists, it is not at all clear to those working at the leading edge of scientific inquiry that an objective physical description of the universe actually exists. The destruction of traditional concepts of time, space, matter, energy, of life itself, is both frightening, and hopeful. Given the dramatic efforts of modern physics to unravel the mysteries

of the physical world, coupled with the possibility of the discovery of theories that better explain space-time (or atemporal space), perhaps even the discovery and/or existence of other "dimensions", all manner of extraordinary event may eventually be explained. Yet it is also possible that, despite appearances to the contrary, the universe does not have an objective and/or observable fundamental physical nature, and that no explanation is possible.

Again we need to remember that all theories owe their credibility to repeated statistical successes. Even in the case of generally accepted physical laws, like the ones we have just discussed, one observed deviation would result in the probability of the theorem being correct going to zero. When a theory is for the first time shown to be false it is not merely more likely to be false, IT IS FALSE. On the other hand, the more observations reported which confirm the predictions of a "law", the higher the probability is that the law is true. No matter how many observations are made, the possibility may always exist that the law is in fact false.

About a year before his death Einstein concluded, "I consider it quite possible that physics cannot be based on the field concept, i. e., on continuous structures. In that case nothing remains of my entire castle in the air gravitation theory included, [and of] the rest of modern physics." Albert Einstein (1954). At this point, we simply do not have a theory that explains what we observe, perhaps someday we will have such a theory, perhaps not.

Creation

Most scientific arguments for and against the probable existence of that which is "outside science", outside the reality that we observe, ignore a remarkable, purely objective, fundamental question. Simply stated, before we can legitimately discuss what must exist for trees and animals and human beings to evolve, we need to ask what the probability is that something or someone outside the reality that we know must exist for our very universe to exist. The apparent answer will surprise many.

At the time this note was written it was generally accepted that all of space-time was created at or near a point in time popularly known as the "big bang". By the time you read this, science may have discovered a better description for the beginning second of the cosmos, but the possible implications of current knowledge are too interesting not to mention. Entropy is a measure of disorder. If a glass of milk turns over, the milk will pour out onto the table, yet one will never see milk flow from a table back into the glass. This is because the entropy (disorder) of the system tends to increase over time. Another example, you may pour cream into your coffee to lighten it, but the cream will never remove itself to make the coffee black again. As a rule, complex systems tend to become more disordered over time.

The universe we live in is a place of amazingly low entropy, were it not so we would not be alive. Each of us is an example of a highly ordered, low entropy, system. Every star, planet, rock, tree, living creature, everything in the universe that is more ordered than the diffuse interstellar gas clouds that surround us, is an example of a system with varying degrees of low entropy. It is generally accepted that for our universe to have the extremely low entropy it now has required as the "starting point" at the big bang the selection of a virtually infinitesimally tiny volume of the

total phase space of all possible universes (phase space is a complete mathematical description of any physical system).

To be more exact, the universe we live in apparently began at a point constituting approximately 1 part in 10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power of the entire phase space volume of all possible universes! This is a deceptively large number, which in fact cannot be written out! If you tried to write it out by writing the number "1" on a piece of paper, you would have to write a 0 on every single atom in the universe just to approach the number of zeros that follow the one, even then you would not be close to writing out the entire number. This amazing requirement for the initial condition at creation suggests that the odds are no better than 1 in 10 raised to the 10th power raised to the 123rd power that the universe in which we live was created by random chance. If the math holds true, and this interpretation is as logical as it seems, it means that the chance that the universe was created at random is as about close to zero, as close to impossible, as one can get!

Many find comfort in believing that, even if science has not yet discovered all of the laws, every physical event from creation onward evolved according to a set of absolute physical laws. The mathematically precise physical structure of the universe, the tiny place we have in the incredible vastness of space, the biologic characteristics we share with animals, etc., all may be interpreted as evidence of a purely mechanistic process that governs our lives. Yet if we consider the complexity of that which we observe, and if we are honest with ourselves, we cannot escape the intuitive feeling that there is an "order" in the chaos that cannot be explained by science.

Even if the odds against the random selection of the total phase space of all possible universes that is required for the observed entropy are not quite as impossible as they seem, we simply cannot ignore the intuitive feeling that the odds are almost infinitely against the random creation and existence of all of the following: a) matter and energy and the physical laws that govern them; b) the expansion of the universe from a tiny speck to the vast expanse which we see today; c) the defeat of entropy and the combination of matter and energy in exactly the right way to form every object in the universe; d) inanimate chemicals structured in precisely the correct way to create "life"; e) biologic processes that give the human species consciousness at a level that supports rational thought; etc. Think about this for awhile. No matter how strongly we may feel that life is the result of physical processes only, if we are objective we must admit that it intuitively seems virtually impossible that a purely random physical process could create the almost infinitely complex, yet extremely well ordered, low entropy, universe in which we live.

While it seems that the underlying laws of the universe could not have been created by chance, I have no explanation why it also often appears that the observable physical universe deterministically evolves according to complex statistical laws. I don't know why reality is such that life appears to many as nothing more than a complex, biologic process, riddled with physical imperfections. I am not willing to say with certainty that the universe does not appear to exhibit many of the characteristics of a physical entity devoid of the non-physical.

None-the-less, I am convinced that there is no objective statistical support for the conclusion that the world in which we live is the result of purely physical processes. No matter how hard we might try to ignore them, we are confronted by astronomical odds against random selection of a

set of initial conditions that could create a low entropy universe that exhibits the complexity of our universe. We are faced with a mystery that, if we are honest with ourselves, at the very least leaves us with the possibility that the observable physical universe is not "all there is".

It is very, very, important to understand that, no matter what you may have been told or what you may think, no human being has any idea whatsoever what the fundamental physical nature of the universe really is. The consensus is that our universe began as a single, almost infinitely massive, almost infinitely small, "speck". As of this date, no one has been able to comprehend, let alone explain, the mechanism during the microsecond of the Planck epoch that allowed the universe to expand from a dot smaller than an atom, into the billions upon billions of stars that fill our universe. Anyone who takes the time to try to visualize billions of stars bursting out of a pinhead, will realize the impossibility of making "sense" of what appears to be a scientific fact. No one has a clue how to understand the reality of a quantum particle that is quite literally "everywhere" at the same time. No one knows how the "action at a distance" that relativity suggests cannot occur, actually does occur, if it really does. No one knows how to define or quantify "human consciousness". There is only one scientific deduction we can be relatively certain of, and that is that human beings do not know and understand the fundamental nature of physical reality.

What all this tells us is that we have no real idea at all what the true nature of our life on earth is, or what the possibilities are for our continued existence after death! We are so much a part of the tiny portion of universe in which we live that we seldom realize the significance of our limitations. Instead of viewing our lack of knowledge as profound and exciting, we tend to accept with curious apathy that there may be far more to our existence than we know.

At this point in our journey I am not trying to suggest that anything exists beyond our perceived universe, nor am I trying to suggest that nothing exists beyond our known universe. I am not suggesting if we survive the grave we will find ourselves in some dimension beyond the one we can sense and measure during our physical lives, perhaps so, perhaps not. Nor am I suggesting we can never sense and know about that which lies beyond the grave, if anything, until we experience physical death, perhaps so, perhaps not.

What I am saying is scientific study and statistical analysis are absolutely limited to that which we can observe and measure. The absence of scientific proof does not make it less likely, nor make it more likely, that something, which is true and real, lies beyond human observation. The important thing to remember is that no matter how likely or unlikely you "FEEL" it is that something exists, if it is beyond human ability to observe, you CANNOT "KNOW" if it is likely or unlikely that it does exist.

This is true for the probability of the existence of life after death. From a scientific standpoint we simply cannot say it is likely that life after death exists. It is equally true that we absolutely cannot say it is likely that life after death does not exist. We simply cannot say that is likely or unlikely that life exists after physical death.

While scientists may offer attributes of physical death as proof that human beings do not exist beyond the grave, the real answer to the question lies beyond human ability to scientifically prove, one way or the other. Indeed, we cannot say anything objective at all about the possibility

of life after death. If life after death does not exist, it does not exist, period. If life after death does exist, it does exist, period.

Many of you will read what we have just discussed, agree with it, and then let it fade out of your mind as you move on to whatever comes next. If what we are saying is true, it is fundamental and “profound”. Perhaps it will be important and helpful to you later on when we discuss what may be the most important choice in your life. For this reason we urge you to think carefully about what has been said, being certain you understand what we are talking about.

For those who might think the conclusions above are not based on science, we reprint Roger Penrose’s (an eminent physicist who in 1969, along with Stephen Hawking, proved that all matter within a black hole collapses to a singularity) short yet detailed analysis:

(from the Emperor’s New Mind, Penrose, pages 339-345 copyright 1989, Penguin Books – out-of-print – often available in libraries & used book stores)

How special was the big bang?

Let us try to understand just how much of a constraint a condition such as $WEYL = 0$ at the big bang was. For simplicity (as with the above discussion) we shall suppose that the universe is closed. In order to be able to work out some clear-cut figures, we shall assume, furthermore, that the number B of baryons—that is, the number of protons and neutrons, taken together—in the universe is roughly given by

$$B = 10^{80}.$$

(There is no particular reason for this figure, apart from the fact that, observationally B must be at least as large as this; Eddington once claimed to have calculated B exactly, obtaining a figure which was close to the above value! No-one seems to believe this particular calculation any more, but the value 10^{80} appears to have stuck.) If B were taken to be larger than this (and perhaps, in actual fact, $B = \text{infinity}$) then the figures that we would obtain would be even more striking than the extraordinary figures that we shall be arriving at in a minute! Try to imagine the phase space (cf. p. 177 of Penrose’s book) of the entire universe! Each point in this phase space represents a different possible way that the universe might have started off. We are to picture the Creator, armed with a ‘pin’ which is to be placed at some point in the phase space (Fig. 7.19 not shown). Each different positioning of the pin provides a different universe. Now the accuracy that is needed for the Creator’s aim depends upon the entropy of the universe that is thereby created. It would be relatively ‘easy’ to produce a high entropy universe, since then there would be a large volume of the phase space available for the pin to hit. (Recall that the entropy is proportional to the logarithm of the volume of the phase space concerned.) But in order to start off the universe in state of low entropy—so that there will indeed be a second law of thermodynamics—the Creator must aim for a much tinier volume of the phase space. How tiny would this region be, in order that a universe closely resembling the one in which we actually live would be the result? In

order to answer this question, we must first turn to a very remarkable formula, due to Jacob Bekenstein (1972) and Stephen Hawking (1975), which tells us what the entropy of a black hole must be.

Consider a black hole, and suppose that its horizon's surface area is A . The Bekenstein-Hawking formula for the black hole's entropy is the:

$$S_{bh} = A/4 + (kc^3 / Gh)$$

where k is Boltzmann's constant, c is the speed of light, G is Newton's gravitational constant, and h is Planck's constant over 2π . The essential part of this formula is the $A/4$. The part in parentheses merely consists of the appropriate physical constants. Thus, the entropy of a black hole is proportional to its surface area. For a spherically symmetrical black hole, this surface area turns out to be proportional to the square of the mass of the hole

$$A = m^2 \times 8\pi(G^2/c^4).$$

Putting this together with the Bekenstein-Hawking formula, we find that the entropy of a black hole is proportional to the square of its mass:

$$S_{bh} = m^2 \times 2\pi (kG/hc)$$

Thus, the entropy per unit mass of a black hole is proportional to its mass, and so gets larger and larger for larger and larger black holes. Hence, for a given amount of mass-or equivalently, by Einstein's $E = mc^2$, for a given amount of energy-the greatest entropy is achieved when the material has all collapsed into a black hole! Moreover, two black holes gain (enormously) in entropy when they mutually swallow one another up to produce a single united black hole! Large black holes, such as those likely to be found in galactic centres, will provide absolutely stupendous amounts of entropy-far and away larger than the other kinds of entropy that one encounters in other types of physical situation.

There is actually a slight qualification needed to the statement that the greatest entropy is achieved when all the mass is concentrated in a black hole. Hawking's analysis of the thermodynamics of black holes, shows that there should be a non-zero temperature also associated with a black hole. One implication of this is that not quite all of the mass-energy can be contained within the black hole, in the maximum entropy state, the maximum entropy being achieved by a black hole in equilibrium with a 'thermal bath of radiation'. The temperature of this radiation is very tiny indeed for a black hole of any reasonable size. For example, for a black hole of a solar mass, this temperature would be about 10^{-7} K, which is somewhat smaller than the lowest temperature that has been measured in any laboratory to date, and very considerably lower than the 2.7 K temperature of intergalactic space. For larger black holes, the Hawking temperature is even lower!

The Hawking temperature would become significant for our discussion only if either: (i) much tinier black holes, referred to as mini-black holes, might exist in our universe; or (ii) the universe does not recollapse before the Hawking evaporation time—the time according to which the black hole would evaporate away completely. With regard to (i), mini-black holes could only be produced in a suitably chaotic big bang. Such mini-black holes cannot be very numerous in our actual universe, or else their effects would have already been observed; moreover, according to the viewpoint that I am expounding here, they ought to be absent altogether. As regards (ii), for a solar-mass black hole, the Hawking evaporation time would be some 10^{54} times the present age of the universe, and for larger black holes, it would be considerably longer. It does not seem that these effects should substantially modify the above arguments.

To get some feeling for the hugeness of black-hole entropy, let us consider what was previously thought to supply the largest contribution to the entropy of the universe, namely the 2.7 K black-body background radiation. Astrophysicists had been struck by the enormous amounts of entropy that this radiation contains, which is far in excess of the ordinary entropy figures that one encounters in other processes (e.g. in the sun). The background radiation entropy is something like 10^8 for every baryon (where I am now choosing 'natural units', so that Boltzmann's constant, is unity). (In effect, this means that there are 10^8 photons in the background radiation for every baryon.) Thus, with 10^{88} baryons in all, we should have a total entropy of

10^{88}

for the entropy in the background radiation in the universe.

Indeed, were it not for the black holes, this figure would represent the total entropy of the universe, since the entropy in the background radiation swamps that in all other ordinary processes. The entropy per baryon in the sun, for example, is of order unity. On the other hand, by black-hole standards, the background radiation entropy is utter 'chicken feed'. For the Bekenstein-Hawking formula tells us that the entropy per baryon in a solar mass black hole is about 10^{20} , in natural units, so had the universe consisted entirely of solar mass black holes, the total figure would have been very much larger than that given above, namely

10^{100} .

Of course, the universe is not so constructed, but this figure begins to tell us how 'small' the entropy in the background radiation must be considered to be when the relentless effects of gravity begin to be taken into account.

Let us try to be a little more realistic. Rather than populating our galaxies entirely with black holes, let us take them to consist mainly of ordinary stars—some 10^{11} of them—and each to have a million (i.e. 10^6) solar-mass black-hole at its core (as might be reasonable for our own Milky Way galaxy). Calculation shows

that the entropy per baryon would now be actually somewhat larger even than the previous huge figure, namely now 10^{21} , giving a total entropy, in natural units, of

10^{101} .

We may anticipate that, after a very long time, a major fraction of the galaxies' masses will be incorporated into the black holes at their centres. When this happens, the entropy per baryon will be 10^{31} , giving a monstrous total of

10^{111} .

However, we are considering a closed universe so eventually it should recollapse; and it is not unreasonable to estimate the entropy of the final crunch by using the Bekenstein-Hawking formula as though the whole universe had formed a black hole. This gives an entropy per baryon of 10^{43} , and the absolutely stupendous total, for the entire big crunch would be

10^{123} .

This figure will give us an estimate of the total phase-space volume V available to the Creator, since this entropy should represent the logarithm of the volume of the (easily) largest compartment. Since 10^{123} is the logarithm of the volume, the volume must be the exponential of 10^{123} , i.e.

$V = 10^{10^{123}}$.

in natural units! (Some perceptive readers may feel that I should have used the figure $e^{10^{123}}$, but for numbers of this size, the e and the 10 are essentially interchangeable!) How big was the original phase-space volume W that the Creator had to aim for in order to provide a universe compatible with the second law of thermodynamics and with what we now observe? It does not much matter whether we take the value

$W = 10^{10^{101}}$ or $W = 10^{10^{88}}$

given by the galactic black holes or by the background radiation, respectively, or a much smaller (and, in fact, more appropriate) figure which would have been the actual figure at the big bang. Either way, the ratio of V to W will be, closely

$V/W = 10^{10^{123}}$.

This now tells us how precise the Creator's aim must have been: namely to an accuracy of one part in $10^{10^{123}}$.

This is an extraordinary figure. One could not possibly even write the number down in full, in the ordinary denary notation: it would be '1' followed by 10^{123}

successive '0's! Even if we were to write a '0' on each separate proton and on each separate neutron in the entire universe-and we could throw in all the other particles as well for good measure-we should fall far short of writing down the figure needed. The precision needed to set the universe on its course is seen to be in no way inferior to all that extraordinary precision that we have already become accustomed to in the superb dynamical equations (Newton's, Maxwell's, Einstein's) which govern the behaviour of things from moment to moment.

But why was the big bang so precisely organized, whereas the big crunch (or the singularities in black holes) would be expected to be totally chaotic? It would appear that this question can be phrased in terms of the behaviour of the WEYL part of the space-time curvature at space-time singularities. What we appear to find is that there is a constraint

$$\text{WEYL} = 0$$

(or something very like this) at initial space-time singularities-but not at final singularities-and this seems to be what confines the Creator's choice to this very tiny region of phase space. The assumption that this constraint applies at any initial (but not final) space-time singularity, I have termed The Weyl Curvature Hypothesis. Thus, it would seem, we need to understand why such a time-asymmetric hypothesis should apply if we are to comprehend where the second law has come from.

How can we gain any further understanding of the origin of the second law? We seem to have been forced into an impasse. We need to understand why space-time singularities have the structures that they appear to have; but space-time singularities are regions where our understanding of physics has reached its limits. The impasse provided by the existence of space-time singularities is sometimes compared with another impasse: that encountered by physicists early in the century, concerning the stability of atoms (cf. p. 228). In each case, the well-established classical theory had come up with the answer 'infinity', and had thereby proved itself inadequate for the task. The singular behaviour of the electromagnetic collapse of atoms was forestalled by quantum theory; and likewise it should be quantum theory that yields a finite theory in place of the 'infinite' classical space-time singularities in the gravitational collapse of stars. But it can be no ordinary quantum theory. It must be a quantum theory of the very structure of space and time. Such a theory, if one existed, would be referred to as 'quantum gravity'. Quantum gravity's lack of existence is not for want of effort, expertise, or ingenuity on the part of the physicists. Many first-rate scientific minds have applied themselves to the construction of such a theory, but Without success. This is the impasse to which we have been finally led in our attempts to understand the directionality and the flow of time.

[Comment: It seems that the only reasonable theories that might argue against the physical reality of Penrose's conclusions belong to the multiverse / many worlds school of thought, with

perhaps the most promising being Andrei Linde's idea that our universe is the result of a quantum fluctuation (allowing for the possibility of probabilistic multiverses where observation selects only one or a few actual universes). It also seems fair to say that all such theories are very highly speculative, and that being so highly speculative none present a real challenge to the Penrose calculations.

The truly amazing conclusion that we are confronted with is the objective fact that it appears that the creation of our universe cannot be the result of chance. Many will dismiss this fact because they misunderstand the solid science behind it, and the enormous significance if in fact it is true. For anyone with an open mind, the objective fact that it appears that our universe cannot be the result of chance, while perhaps not 100% conclusive, offers an extraordinarily strong argument that a Creator must exist. We will return to that question a bit later, after we discuss the difference between truth, belief, and faith.]

Why?

Before leaving our discussion of the scientific method, we should note the interesting, apparently absolute, limit whereby the question "how" becomes the question "why". Let's jump ahead 10,000 years, and assume that a unified field theory has been discovered. A unified field theory is a theory that describes the behavior of all forces and elements according to a set of fairly simple laws. If and when such a theory is "proved" we may in fact have succeeded in explaining the past, present, and future behavior of all observed matter and energy. However the ultimate questions will remain. Why were the unified forces that control energy and matter created? Why do they exist? Who or what is the source of such primordial forces if they are the most fundamental of forces? These will still be unanswered, and it is not hard to see, will remain unanswerable.

Science will have succeeded in fully describing the forces seen in nature, and their effects on matter and energy. The question "how" forces work will, for the most part, have been answered. But an explanation of the creation, the existence, the source of the forces, the answer to "why" such forces exist, will be missing. The ultimate question, "WHY?", most clearly defines the limits of science and human beings.

Without realizing it, we constantly bump against this invisible wall that surrounds us and limits our knowledge. We know that the force of gravity causes objects to be attracted to each other, but why is this so? Think about it a few minutes. Obviously gravity needs to exist to prevent objects from flying apart, but why not have a gravity that is half as strong, or maybe two times stronger? At a more fundamental level, why does it matter if objects fly apart or stay together? Why do sub-atomic particles group together to form atoms that form molecules that eventually form us? We can reason that laws act like they do to preserve the order of the universe, but that answer really begs the question why the universe has any order in the first place?

In this increasingly scientific era, many of us have lost the wonder we once had when we looked at the physical world. For example, we take for granted the widely accepted fact that all that is in the universe started as an almost infinitesimally small speck of energy/matter. Because science appears to be able to tell us "how" the universe evolved from a tiny fraction of a second after the

"big bang" up to today, we assume that science can tell us "why" that initial speck exponentially exploded into that which surrounds us. Yet science cannot explain the ultimate origin and existence of what we euphemistically call physical "reality". Despite all that we have discovered, despite what future insights the scientific method may yield, science cannot deduce the origin of the universe. Each of us should recognize, and be continually amazed by, the infinite complexity of the reality that surrounds us that appears to have evolved from infinite simplicity. We should live in a state of wonder at the fact that the question "why" is a profound mystery beyond the ability of science and humankind to answer.

We should note in passing that the anthropic principle points out that if the laws of the universe were not suitable for our present existence on earth, we would simply not be here to ask the question "why"? Yet applying that principle to the question "why are the laws like they are" invites a less than satisfactory, circular, answer. If we are here because the laws are as they are, that does not lead to the logical conclusion that the laws are as they are because we are here, so we are left without an answer to our basic question. The anthropic answer, along with every other reasonable answer one can give to what we might call an intermediate version of the question "why", allows us to continue to ask the ultimate question "why"? In response to the answer that the laws of the universe are as they are because they must be so for us to be here, the very real question may still be asked, "why" are we here? Perhaps the only answer we can give to the question "why do forces exist and behave as they do" is "just because" they do. Perhaps, however, the answer is that they behave the way they were designed to behave.

The more we learn, the more humble science becomes. What seemed obvious, now seems vague. If humankind cannot know anything with complete certainty, then science is not the solid rock it appears to be. Scientific discoveries possess an ephemeral quality seldom recognized by observers. Since science has not, and perhaps cannot, discover fundamental laws that guide the physical universe, the failure of modern theories may be the precursor to incredible discoveries which challenge concepts of space and time, uncertainty and determinism, entropy and order, etc. As science matures, the idea that (for want of a better description of the unknown) meaningful fifth and sixth and seventh dimensions may exist seems to be an increasingly comfortable one. No matter what the future of science brings, it is a logical, absolute, fact that unless the answer is somehow "revealed" to us, the ultimate question will remain, "WHY?"

Truth, Belief, & Faith

We have discussed the fact that we can never be certain anything is true. We have noted that since human knowledge is finite, all attempts at proving things must start with unprovable assumptions. We have considered the limitations on human understanding which make all human assertions of fact simply statements of belief. Does all this mean what we believe to be true but cannot prove is any less true? Again, the answer is no. If something is true it is true whether or not you prove, believe in, or have even thought about, its truth.

Literally billions of ideas and beliefs can be suggested to be true. We can propose assumptions, and make eloquent arguments based on those assumptions, which will send us off in any direction we might wish to go. Every day we see people who are certain of the absolute truth of their beliefs, never realizing they have subconsciously talked themselves into accepting as

fundamentally and absolutely true that which is, and must be, based on their assumptions. Thus, we can argue persuasively that we are descendants of martians, that inanimate objects talk to each other, that we really do not exist at all, etc., etc., etc. Since we cannot know whether or not something or someone exists beyond our perception, we cannot know if the wildest of ideas may in fact be true somewhere outside our current existence. Yet even though "anything" may be true, we must not allow ourselves to become casual observers applying logical arguments to first "prove", and then "disprove", fundamental beliefs about the nature and meaning of life. What we want to emphasize is that the reader should put aside all assumptions and beliefs; take a journey into their heart, mind, and soul; and then decide what they want to believe is true.

What is true is true. What then is the difference in believing something to be true, and proving something is true, if indeed the belief is true? The difference is not in the truth of the matter, for the belief itself is either true or not regardless of any belief as to its truth. Rather the difference lies in the realization that what appears absolutely true MAY not be true. That realization, and the humility that should accompany it, emphasizes the importance of reviewing one's beliefs. If we cannot prove anything, how do we determine what is true? If the best we can do is believe something is true, what good is that? The answer lies in what we just said, if what we believe to be true is true, then not being able to prove it is true is not important.

We have been talking as though we start with the belief that everything we seek to prove is untrue, and then go from there. The fact is that we have built into our existence a set of assumptions that certain things are true, assumptions that we base our strongest beliefs on. For example, though nothing can be proven beyond doubt, few would argue the world they live in does not actually exist, or a ball thrown into the air will not fall back to earth, or people do not grow older. Few doubt or question the solid reality of any of the events that make up everyday life, from the esoteric proposition the sun will rise to the reality of mundane chores associated with living.

All you are, all you have been, everything about your life contributes to your belief in the truth of millions upon millions of things. Your life, and your perception of it, is an incredibly intricate web of observations, feelings, and experiences, all parts of your existence, none divisible, all making you, you. Perhaps humans have some inexplicable intuition that gives them insight into what is actually true, perhaps not. The fact is that all anyone can do is to use all the abilities they have to determine what is true. All you can do is to do what you can to think, and analyze, and test, and rethink, until you believe something is true.

In many cases the scientific method appears to serve us well when we search for the "truth". This is particularly so when we sort through results of objective tests to analyze which drug is most effective, what car is best, etc. In other cases logic proves inadequate and "feelings" seem a better guide. Philosophy and religion are both ill suited to scientific inquiry. Because they deal with that which is beyond human perception, philosophical and religious beliefs must come from within each individual, and must be based on all that makes an individual a unique human being. Such beliefs grow when experiences of life combine with that illusive quality that makes each of us the singular person we are.

How much, if any, of the process of determining such fundamental beliefs is guided by insight, and how much is a product of heredity and environment, is a question without answer. I have seen many people, and have myself been, paralyzed by the fear that what I believed to be true might be false. Over the years I have come to believe that if anyone puts a sincere effort into determining what is true, and what is good, they will succeed. Even though they will never be able to "prove" anything, what they find themselves believing to be true and good will be, perhaps even if not perfectly correct, what actually is true and good. There is, of course, no proof for such a belief, yet for me it is fundamentally true.

I am not suggesting that someone who has determined his or her answer to a question before searching for it will ever find the true answer. Those who want to prove their point, even if it is only to themselves, will inevitably mold everything to fit their answer. With varying degrees of discomfort, they will reach their previous conclusion every time. What I am saying is that I am convinced that those who search their hearts, minds, and souls to understand life will find themselves believing certain things to be true and right. Perhaps these more or less inherent beliefs are simply products of human existence and thought. Perhaps, however, they are insights into profound fundamental truths.

What about the times when you feel strongly that something is or might be true, but are uncertain of those feelings because, to some degree, your beliefs lie outside human perception or experience? Beyond mere "belief" is something called "faith". When our beliefs are strong we may choose to have faith in their truth. What then is "faith"? In part faith is having an intense conviction what you believe to be true is in fact true, but it is more than that. Real faith in the truth of something is a product of your total being. It is not only what you believe to be true, but what you want to be true. Faith is a total commitment by you to believe that what you think should be true is true, that what you think should be right and good is in fact right and good.

Those who have faith vary in their intensity of belief. Some are so convinced of the goodness of what they have faith in that, no matter what happens to cast doubt on their beliefs, they are determined to hold onto their faith for as long as they live. For them there is no alternative, they have faith that what they believe to be true is, if truth exists at all, true. Others have a faith that may be weakened by the conflicting beliefs of friends, or by the influence of unexpected events.

You cannot have faith in something or someone simply because there is nothing better to believe in. Faith cannot be based on negative choices, but must be based on a real, strong, sometimes total, desire that what you believe should be true actually is true. You must want what you have faith in to be true. Since nothing can be fully proved or disproved, unless truth has been somehow revealed, that which people have faith in is, for them, that which is true.

The End May Be Just The Beginning

What is worth having faith in? Earlier we said if your existence ends with the death of your body it is virtually inconceivable that life has any meaning at all. We believe that your existence has meaning only if you continue to exist in some form or fashion after the death of your body. So it seems imperative, if there is to be any reason and purpose to your life, that you prove or believe or have faith in an existence beyond the grave. Since it looks like no one can prove they continue

to exist after death, the question is whether or not you choose to believe you do. Yet existence beyond the grave lies so far beyond human perception and observation, beyond human comprehension and understanding, that human feelings about such existence are inadequate to base substantial beliefs on.

Then is this a matter you should have faith in? Your answer to that question, if it is to be more than a casual one which will not last, must be based on what you believe life is "all about", not only after death but also right now. If you are to have faith in a life after death you need to believe people are more than biologic creatures. To be worth having faith in, to be worth wanting, life beyond the grave must be more than just existing through time. It must offer a hope of something worth living for, of "goodness", perhaps of joy.

We may imagine many different things about life beyond the grave. We may believe in a metaphysical extension of life, somehow self-perpetuating and dependent only on a communion of some sort of mental energy unique to human beings. We may believe in reincarnation, whereby forms change but human beings never die. There is no limit to what we may believe life after death will be like. As we have said, no one can prove us wrong, or right.

Speculation about the "physical" nature of life after death can be little more than guesses, and offers little help in making a decision whether or not we would want to live in such a world. If we are more than our physical selves it would seem that there must be more to look forward to in a life after death than the "physical" aspects of that life. We need to find out if there is something beyond the physical that every human must do if they want to be more than worthless travelers in time.

While we cannot say that it is "objectively" likely or unlikely, if you continue to exist after physical death does it not seem "intuitively" likely you will retain the intellect and capacity for rational thought we have postulated is essential to your uniqueness? The intuitive answer is that it is indeed likely rational intellectual thought will exist in a world beyond the physical. It seems that if you are to remain you, the unique intellect which is a fundamental part of your existence in your present life would continue to exist in the next. Furthermore, it seems intuitively likely that rational thought beyond the constraints of earthly boundaries would be of a much greater character.

If we survive the grave does it not seem intuitively likely that the most positive aspects of our life on earth will also be positive features of the world after death? In looking for a reason to believe in an extension of life beyond the grave that is worth living for, and thus worth having faith in, you must look at this world and this life. Life on earth is the only basis we have on which to project what a world beyond the grave might be like. You must find the most positive aspects of this life, you must find in this life a reason to believe life has meaning and purpose. Perhaps you will find "good" in this life that gives you a reason to believe, or have faith, that there is a life after death filled with "joy". To help you choose what to believe about life, now and beyond the grave, we need to explore our present lives. We need to consider not only the "physical", but also the "non-physical" aspects of our present existence.

If and when you understand life, and know what your life could be like both now and after death, you will be able to choose whether or not you want to have faith that there is something worth living for now and after death. You may choose to have faith that your life has meaning and purpose. You may find that you want to have faith your life will not end at the grave. You may choose to live the kind of life now you hope you will live after death. In the rest of these notes, we will be considering whether there is "good" in this life that makes it worth having faith in a life after death.

If we do continue to exist after our physical deaths, then each moment of our lives, both before and after death, may have meaning and purpose. If we survive death then each of us has been, is, and will continue to be a unique being. What then is the meaning and purpose of life? What should, or must, you do? What choices do you have right now?

Many philosophers, psychiatrists, and others, argue persuasively that self-satisfaction is the most important human goal. A society made up of individuals who maximize their own well being is a society at its best. They conclude that when each of us reaches our own point of maximum pleasure, all of us benefit. What constitutes the maximization of pleasure is a hotly debated question, answered in countless, totally different ways. Ideas range from doing anything that makes you feel "good", to espousing intense dedication to such diverse things as political causes, meditation, or simply the pursuit of pleasure.

Many suggest the free market works well in selecting what is worthwhile in life, with various methods of providing pleasure coming and going as demand identifies, supplies, and satisfies needs. Others argue the best society is made up of family groups that seek to maximize the family's happiness. Some extend the group to include friends and even strangers, but often exclude those outside the group's geographic and social spheres. Volume after volume after volume has been written describing what various people believe life is all about. Multitudes of people have dedicated large parts of their lives to convincing others of the truth of their ideas and the wisdom of following their examples.

Instead of closely examining and eliminating one at a time what I believe to be the fallacies and follies of humankind, I will suggest to you what many believe life is all about. If you choose to know and understand what is said, I believe you will discover what is true and gives meaning and purpose to life. We are about to look for something in life worth living for, something to have faith in.

What many suggest is worth living for is love. Not what we often call love, but that which is the most profound of human experiences.

LOVE

The love we are talking about is far more, incredibly more, than that which we normally call love. Love is the most positive of human experiences. It is the deepest, most profound, of human relationships. It is the giving of all you have to give to someone else.

What is love? Love is beyond definition, it cannot be described in words. No effort to describe love can in any way answer what love is. Love is beyond human ability to analyze and evaluate. Yet each of us has, as a part of our very being, an understanding of love. The love we are talking about is basic, profound, a fundamental part of our existence. In each and every one of our hearts and minds, and I believe souls, we know and understand what love is.

Love is so deeply a part of human beings, so far beyond definition and description, so elusive to those who halfheartedly seek it, that you will know and understand love only if you engage in a very personal search of heart and mind and soul which leads to the very essence of your being. To understand life it is necessary to understand love. No one can make you understand love, you alone must be willing to take the inward journey. I will repeatedly urge you to do so, for nothing can take the place of that understanding.

Most of us think we already know what love is, when in fact few of us do. Sometime during our lives the majority of us will believe we have found true love, even though we have not. Many of us will go to our graves believing we have loved, when we never loved at all.

For most people, their understanding of love is hidden deep within. Each time they glimpse love and feel it trying to surface, they push it back to its resting place. Few are willing to search for the love that may be found inside them, few are willing to let their knowledge of love surface. I believe each and every person who truly wants to know and understand love, and who is willing to search and search and search their heart, mind, and soul, will know and understand love.

The search is difficult, it is perhaps the most difficult task you will ever face. If you search your heart, mind, and soul you will find yourself surrounded by multitudes of conflicting feelings, questions, doubts, etc. These will draw your attention away from your search, and may make it seem futile and worthless. If you try to deal with each distraction as it appears, you will end up floundering from side to side, without direction, your goal appearing on the horizon yet never getting closer.

Before answering the many questions love poses, before satisfying your doubts, you should complete your search. Search your heart, mind, and soul, your being, to know and understand love. Set aside all questions, doubts, and fears, put all your energy and thought into your search. First understand love, then ask and answer questions about it.

It is very hard to stay on track. Your search will take you through and among daily experiences and deep memories filled with the emptiness, cruelty, and physical pleasures of a world where love is seldom seen. The cold glance of strangers on the street, the reality of poverty in the shadow of enormous wealth, watching people get sick and die a seemingly final death. Thoughts of food, drink, luxury, sex, all the physical pleasures you could be enjoying. All these pull at your attention and cause your mind to drift. Your focus is blurred as first one thing and then another interrupts your search.

Even when you think you have broken through the fog and are running toward your goal, a tiny diversion, a moments pause, and you are flung back into that strange and cloudy state of doubts, not knowing where, if anywhere, you are. Back in the haze, you may find yourself believing you

reached your goal when you did not. This feeling of success can be strong, and the rush of living may make it seem even more real since little time is available to stop and think about who you are, where you have been, and where you are going. What can happen is that you can make yourself believe you understand love, when in fact all you have seen is false illusions of love. You may wrongly conclude that love is really not that special at all.

To allow yourself to stop short of your goal, to allow yourself to believe you understand love when you do not, is to condemn yourself to the deep darkness shared by all who live without love. A darkness few recognize, a blackness the depth of which can be appreciated only by those who find love. Only those who finish their search will know and understand love.

Completing the search requires a willingness to start. It is far easier to live your life following whatever sort of daily routine you have, over the years, consciously and subconsciously constructed for yourself, a routine designed to make you feel good about your life. For most of us this means mixing with our daily activities that bring us self-satisfaction and physical pleasure, just enough "good" deeds to give us the illusory feeling that we are "good" people. For better or worse you nurture an image of yourself you have been developing since childhood. An image that dictates what is expected of you and rules how you act, making your life a repeating cycle of yesterdays.

Even if you do not feel good about your life, you are usually more comfortable not straying too far from the familiar. It is easier to live a "normal" life than to question and search and change. Yet if you want to know and understand love you must give the search your all, without fear of, or resistance to, the changes it may bring in your life. You need to search and search until you know what it means to love, what it would be like to live in a world where each and every person loves every other person.

This is more than a mental exercise. If after your search you believe love is what all people should give each other, then you have perhaps not only found what gives life meaning and purpose right now, but also found that which makes it worth having faith in life beyond the grave. At this point I am not suggesting that you embrace without question the ideas of eternity and the goodness of love. I am saying you will find it virtually, or perhaps totally, impossible to decide whether or not to believe that love is worth living for, if you do not know and understand what love is. Only when you are willing to search your heart, mind, soul, your very being, to know love, will you understand the decision to love or not to love. Only then can you make your choice.

In the remaining pages of this book we will give some examples of love, discuss what those who love do, and talk in general about love. Yet nothing we say will bring you an understanding of love, only your search can do that. Your search will begin whenever you want it to, and will end whenever you want it to. This book is useful only if you take the hours, days, months, or years, whatever it takes, to complete your search. If you stop when you find that half-hearted, fleeting, shallow thing most people call "love", your efforts will have been futile and worthless. You will have failed to find what love really is.

It is very easy to stop short of understanding love. The idea of pure, real love, is so alien to our experiences, so foreign to the world we live in, we subconsciously, and even consciously, reject it as a non-existent fantasy. Yet it does exist. Because we seldom, if ever, witness such love does not mean it is less than real. Because the experiences of our past and the realities of our daily existence attack love does not mean it is a fantasy. Our doubts and fears, desires and temptations, weaknesses and longing to "live", cannot change the fact that pure, true, real, love exists, and that people can love one another.

If you love someone who is hungry, you will give them food; someone who is thirsty, you will give them water; someone who is cold, you will give them your coat. If you love someone who is sick, you will care for them until they are well; someone who is in prison, you will visit them; someone without a home, you will take them home with you. These are all acts and deeds those who love do for the people they love. Yet love is far more than the doing of any particular act or deed. While those who love people will do the things we just mentioned, simply doing "good deeds" is not the same as loving. Many who do not love do "good deeds". Many who say they love, and perhaps even believe they love, if they love at all, do so only halfheartedly and from moment to moment.

It is hard to say that someone who feeds a person when they are hungry and then leaves them to find their own shelter, really loves that person. It is hard to call love the giving of money to an orphanage, when children's cries for attention and companionship go unanswered. It is difficult to understand how someone can say they love a person when they make that person feel they must applaud their donor for every gift they receive. Love is far more than acts, deeds, words, or feelings. To love someone, really love someone, is to give them true, deep, pure, indefinable, indescribable love. It is giving to others the love that you will find and understand if you complete your search of heart, mind, and soul.

We said we seldom, maybe never, see true love. You may have witnessed, or been part of, one of those rare occasions when people truly love other people. When a mother gently hugs her baby and love flows between them, when two people's eyes meet and they exchange soft smiles that flow from the love in their hearts, when someone gives all they have to help someone in need. These are moments of true love, moments we choose to give one another. What we are talking about is love - true, pure, real, love.

If you love, you will help a stranger who needs help, even if it puts you in danger. If you love, you will think first about the needs of those you love, and only then think about your own needs. If you love, you will do what you can, all you can, for everyone you meet.

Those who really understand love know in their heart, mind, and soul that love is the greatest thing in life one human being can give another. If you truly love someone you are giving them your very best. We have reached an awkward point in trying to use language to describe a state of being which affects the totality of human existence. How can we adequately describe how a person who truly loves thinks, feels, and acts? We can't. Only you can search within yourself to know and understand love. Unless you have completed your search of your heart, mind, and soul and know and understand love, you will not understand what I am saying, or what anyone else is

saying, when we tell you about the love we find in our heart, mind, and soul. So how can you understand what we are saying when we say love is the best part of human life?

Regardless of human inability to describe love, you and I and everyone else can look inward to know and understand love. And when you, or I, or anyone else, completes their search and knows and understands love, we know and understand that love is indeed the most positive element of human existence. We know that the very best each of us can do is to love. We may find it difficult to talk about love with someone who has not yet finished their search, however once a person understands love they join all others who have completed their search in a communion of knowledge which makes communication of ideas about love easy, and makes what is said clear.

If you have trouble visualizing love, it may be helpful for you to travel in your mind to a world where pure love is freely given by every human being to every other human being. Do not let the fact that such a world does not exist around you discourage you. We may never choose to fill our world with pure love. Yet because each of us can choose love, such a world is possible! Let yourself feel in your heart, mind, and soul the love such a world would be filled with.

Visualize in your heart, mind, and soul a place where you love every person, and where every person loves you. Feel the joy of love flowing from you to every person, and from every person to you. No war, or even anger, no prisons. No loneliness, no hunger, no poverty. Instead that world would be an incredible place filled with peaceful joys of love not only shared by, but in fact chosen by, all who live there.

It may take minutes, or it may take years, for you to enter that world in your imagination and feel the glowing warmth and peace. Now is the time to start your trip. If visions of a place filled with love do not come to you today, try again tomorrow, or next week. Keep letting your heart, mind, and soul drift off to a world of pure love. Love every person you meet in that world and let them love you in return.

At this point you should sit back and think about what is being said, for in these few pages we have jumped from looking for something worth living for, to the suggestion that you search yourself for an understanding of love, to the idea that all people should love one another. If you have not searched your heart, mind, soul, your very being, and do not yet understand love, what we are saying may seem interesting but not profound. I wish I could think of words and logical arguments that would make true, pure, real, love, crystal clear to you, but I can't. We are simply not talking about the kind of understanding that comes from reasoned analysis. I could fill these pages with elegant prose and poetry describing love, yet not one word would have the power or effect that even a fleeting inward glimpse of love has.

Your Best Is Good Enough

If you understand love you know loving does not require you to mechanically follow a set pattern of "right" actions. You know instead that if you love you will do the best you can in every situation, even if you cannot determine what the real solution is. If you love you do your

best, and doing your best is something you can always do. Doing your best simply requires that which you are capable of, no more.

This does not mean loving is any easier because you do not have to know what the "correct" answer is. On the contrary, to say love requires you to do your best is to say that love requires of you all you have to give. Love requires everything you can give, your total effort. By requiring only that which you are capable of giving, it is always your choice whether you love or don't love. If you understand love you know it is your choice, and your choice alone, to love or not to love. It is a profound responsibility to be able, every moment of your life, to love or not to love.

Two of the most misused words in the English language are the words "can", and its opposite "cannot". Everywhere you go you hear people saying they can't do something, or they can only do so much. Everyone declares what he or she can and cannot do.

How are these words misused? The word "can" is frequently used to announce a person's intention to do that which there was never any doubt of their ability to do. Similarly, people say they "cannot" do that which they can, but do not want to, do. The words can and cannot have become so popular you seldom hear anyone say, "I don't want to go to the movie", instead they say, "Sorry but I can't go".

If you are unable to do something, then you may say, "I cannot do that" with the assurance that what you have said is correct. Yet when you use the remarkable power of the word cannot to relieve the human mind of the unwelcome responsibility of making a choice, you are not really relieved of anything at all. If we are presented with the choice to do something, and we do not choose to do it, we have made the choice not to do it. When faced with a choice between doing what is right and what is wrong, failure to make a choice is a decision not to do that which is right. Failure to choose to do right is, in and of itself, wrong.

In day to day living, the most important effect of the word "cannot" is the strengthening of a thoughtless, habitual denial of giving love. Since love only requires that you do your best, something you can always do, you can always choose to love.

Who Should You Love?

The following Notes will be very difficult to read and accept if you have not completed your search of your heart, mind, and soul. As you read them please do not reject what they say. Complete your search, know and understand true, pure, real, love, before you make your choices. Take all the time you need, days, weeks, months, to search your heart, mind, and soul to know and understand love. Search your very being, until you know and understand what it means to love everyone with true, pure, real, love. When you know and understand love, you will understand the Notes.

If you love another human being you are giving that human being your very best. If you love every human being you are doing the very best you can do for each of them. Similarly, if they love you they are doing the very best they can for you. It is not hard to see that a world where each and every person loves each and every other person would be the best possible world. Since

each of us can love if and when we want to love, a world filled with love is very much a possibility. Pure love is so rare a quantity in daily life it may seem almost impossible that, if they are willing to, people can love all other people. Yet they can. We can bring about a world filled with love, a world that is worth living for.

Few of us seriously expect to see a day on earth when all people love one another. There are too many people for whom physical pleasure is more desirable than love. Only the most optimistic dreamers hold hope for a world filled with love. So what is the next best world? If you understand love you know you can love people even if they do not love you. You can always choose to love, and if love is the best you can do, does it not seem true that you should love even if you are not loved? Does it not seem intuitively true that you should always choose love?

If life ends with physical death, perhaps the proper response to hate would not be love, but would be some form of resistance to hate that minimizes its influence on others? Yet that cannot be, for we have already said if existence ends with physical death nothing we do really matters at all, so any response, or no response, would be equally acceptable. But what if life continues after death, would it matter what we do when faced with hate?

If life exists beyond the grave, and if love is the best part of life in this world, does it not seem intuitively likely that if life after death is to be good it will be an existence filled with love? Of course we are dealing with questions beyond human ability to answer, we are in fact in the murky area where intellect, insight, and intuition blend with belief and faith. There is no way at all we can say anything concrete about what life after death may or may not be like. Yet there exists a "feeling" that at least a portion of whatever lies beyond the grave, if anything, possesses the positive characteristics of life in this world. If we come to believe the most positive aspect of life is love, then the jump to postulating a life after death filled with love seems to be, for some reason, a rather comfortable assumption.

It is beyond human ability to know whether that assumption is based on a realistic interpretation of our existence, or whether it is an illusory fairy tale of immortality based on what our minds would like to be true. Even though we will not know if anything lies beyond physical death until we die, it somehow seems intuitively true that if those who choose to love on earth enter a life after death, it will be a life that is filled with love.

So what is our answer? Who should you love? If loving is good, the question really becomes is there anyone you should not love? If you understand love you know you can always love someone even if the person you love hates you. When you hate those who hate you, you are doing the same wrong to them they are doing to you. The natural reaction is to hate those who hate you, but if you understand love you should, after deep thought and consideration, reach the conclusion that since you never have to hate, you should always love (in our "additional notes" we discuss if there are any exceptions).

What if the person who hates you continues to hate you, and does all kinds of evil to you and to others without sign of remorse? Again, if you understand love you know you can always love another person even if that person hates you. If you can always choose to love people, does it not seem true that you should continue to love them even if they hate you? If we agree that the best

we can do in this life, and in a life after death if one exists, is to love each other, the answer seems clear. If it is your choice to love or not, you should choose to love every moment of your earthly life. That means you should love even if you are not loved, even if you are hated.

If love is worth living for in this life, it is worth living for in whatever life may follow death. If it is possible that we continue to exist after death, it would seem that we should love now with the hope that when we die we will pass into a life where love will not only continue, but will be shared by all who join us there.

Does this mean you should never show any anger? If a child does something you know will hurt them, and those who love them, you will be disappointed and "angry" at both their actions, and perhaps at them. Yet anger that accompanies love is far different than anger that comes from hate, and is perhaps not anger at all. Such "anger" is in fact a deep and emotional concern for people, which seeks to bring a person back to love. The "anger" of a person who loves passes quickly when love is restored, and forgiveness is freely and repeatedly given. If you understand love, you know that if you love someone who hates you, you will forgive them each time they wrong you.

Loving someone does not mean you must condone, or even tolerate, the wrongs they do. Many people who love others and try to help them out of problems like gambling, drinking, casual sex, etc., find themselves defending the other person and slipping into their way of life. There is a fine line between being with people and loving and helping them, and, in an attempt to reach them, accepting at least part of their way of life. If at all times you keep in your heart, mind, and soul what it means to truly love, you will have no trouble knowing where that line is.

If you choose to love, you will constantly have to decide what you should do in particular situations. The natural tendency is to take a middle of the road position that seems to be positive toward everyone involved without being too negative toward yourself. You then declare that your decision is based on love, and all seems well. Loving is not that easy, every single decision about love must be made from your heart, mind, and soul.

If you want to love you must search your very being for the answers love requires, and you must be willing to accept without change the answers you find. You are driving home from work, heading for a birthday party your wife and friends have been planning for you. Traffic is heavy on the freeway. You see a man hitchhiking, he seems unsure of his footing, as you get closer you can tell he is drunk. If you stop you are sure to be late for your party, anyway, there are lots of cars one of which is bound to pick him up, and he doesn't look like he will stagger into the roadway.

You think, "he may be pretending to be drunk so he can rob somebody, a policeman is bound to drive by, I can call one as soon as I get home". Time to decide what to do. You want to drive on by him and not have to decide, but you know you have to stop or not stop. You stop your car, help the man into the passenger seat, he mumbles the town he is going to and then passes out. When you reach the right exit, you get off and try to rouse your passenger. He gets sick and throws up, you stop to let him get some air and to clean out the car.

You're forty minutes late for your party and there isn't a phone in sight. You think about leaving him at a gas station, but you help him back in the car and go on. He sees a bar, yells for you to stop, and curses you when you don't. You arrive in his hometown, but he is too drunk to remember where he lives. You see a motel, get the hitchhiker a room, and pay the desk clerk to look in on him to see he is all right and to bring him breakfast the next morning. You buy him some clean clothes and put them in the room.

You call home and your wife slams the phone down. Finally you arrive home three hours late, your guests have gone, your wife and kids are mad, you are hungry and cold. You think about all the hassle you went through; the party you missed, your party; the drunk hitchhiker cursing you. You think, I hope I never get into another situation like this one, but if I do, I'll do it all over again. If you have not completed your search you may not understand the love given the hitchhiker. If you have, you know that if you choose love you would do the same things the driver did.

If you love someone, whether they are your child or a stranger, you will do the very best you can for them. If you love someone you will do the best you can, every moment of your life, even if it means that you do not have enough to meet your own needs. You will gladly sacrifice your comfort so that they may have the best possible physical and emotional life. You will be filled with joy when their lives are filled with love.

You will have compassion for every human being who does not have enough to eat. You will bring them food, and sit down with them to eat. You will give them the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul. You will not simply leave after you have shared a meal with them, you will love them for the rest of your life.

If you meet someone who is homeless, you will find shelter for them. Yet you will do more, you will visit them and help them with their daily lives. You will listen to their problems and work with them to find solutions. You will help them not because it makes you feel good, but because you love them.

You will care for those who are sick until they get well. You will care for them even if doing so puts your life at risk. You will be a companion to those who are elderly and who will not get well. You will counsel those who are depressed, comfort those whose minds are troubled, and find help for them.

You will spend time with those who are lonely. You will reach out to children who are left by themselves, and need companionship and guidance. You will welcome adults who other people find repulsive and ignore. You will not become impatient or want to be anywhere else. You will stay with them and share with them the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul.

Sit back, and think and think and think about loving people with true, pure, real, love. Take all the time you need to feel and experience the love inside you that you can give to all people. Complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul and know and understand love.

You choose love, that means everything is all right, right? In a very real sense the answer to that question is yes, for you everything is all right. Everything being all right does not, however, mean that your life on earth will be physically better. Probably it will get much worse, for those who choose not to love will be doubly hard on those who do. If you love someone you will not hit them when they strike you. You will give them food, and drink, and shelter even if they hate you and even if you end up not having enough for yourself. If you love them you will help them when they are sick, even if they have cheated you and cursed your stupidity. You will love them no matter what they do to you, with the knowledge that you are doing what all human beings can and should do.

What if the choice comes whether to kill someone, or be killed by them? I cannot see how someone could choose to intentionally kill someone they love. Let me simply say it seems to me that if you continue to exist after death, and if it is true that if you love someone you will never kill them, then you have nothing to fear if because you love you die and enter an existence filled with love.

If love is right, even one decision not to love is wrong. It somehow seems to be intuitive, absolute, logic that during our some 100 or less years on earth, we should do that which may lead to the never ending joy of a life after death filled with love, day after day, year after year, millions of years after millions of years, forever and ever and ever and ever, and we should not do that which may lead to an endless life without love.

When you complete your search perhaps you may not agree with us that you will never inflict physical harm on someone you love. We discuss this very difficult question in a later note - A Fanatic Life or A Normal Life?

The answer you find to this question, and other questions less dramatic but as hard or harder to answer, is to be found in your knowledge and understanding of love. After you have completed your search, and know and understand love, you will have to decide for yourself whether or not our answer to the question about killing, as well as our answers to the many other difficult questions, are based on love, or not. We believe they are, but perhaps they are not. If after you finish reading this you do not agree with one or more of the conclusions we reach, you may want to read our comments and notes, which discuss some of our views on complex questions.

We believe that after you complete your search of heart, mind, and soul you will know and understand that if anything is true, it is true that every moment of their lives each and every human being can and should love each and every other human being. There is no question in my heart, mind, and soul, that every person should love every other person. Indeed, if every person chose to love every other person as they would have those people love them, if every person chose to love every other person as himself or herself, then each of us would do the very best that we could do for every human being in the world. There would be nothing more that we should do for each other, nothing more that we could do.

Difficult questions arise only because there are people who are unwilling to love each other. There are many people who chose not to love other people. There are many people who chose to hate other people. Even though it is a difficult answer, it seems intuitively clear to me that we

should love those who love us and we should love those who hate us. Yet many say that we should not love those who hate us, and want to harm us. While I am convinced that we should love those who hate us, I cannot say with absolute certainty that you will agree with me after you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul. The important thing to remember is that your answers to the millions of questions you face throughout your life must come from the knowledge and understanding of love that you will find when you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul. You must be absolutely certain that you complete your search, and that you know and understand true, pure, real, love.

One essential warning, when faced with a hard question the normal human response is toward self-interest, with elaborate arguments to justify the answer and make it seem to be the result of love. The answer dictated by love is often (for some people almost always) very, very, hard to accept. Yet I am convinced that if you choose love you will accept the toughest of answers, and will find peace and hope in your decisions. At all times you must be absolutely certain that your answers are based on the knowledge and understanding of love you find in your heart, mind, and soul. You must be certain that you always choose true, pure, real, love.

Each moment of hate is a moment when you could have chosen love. If love is best, what could possibly be better than choosing to love every moment of your earthly life? The hope is that by choosing love you will pass on your death into an eternal life of love.

War

One of the strange threads of lovelessness that pervades human history is the cruelty of war. Leaders and their led have, from the ancient days of Viking conquest through the mindless cruelty of Hitler to the countless deaths from hundreds of mini-wars going on today to terrorist attacks to gang warfare in the streets, inflicted the most horrendous tortures on their fellow human beings. The choice of war is easily explained as a choice of power, riches, and the perverse pleasures of pain.

It is simple to define a group as an enemy, be they another nation, race, or merely a group of people with whom you disagree. For those who choose the physical pleasures of power over love, the conversion of human beings into the enemy, and from an enemy into inanimate targets, is simple and automatic. Perhaps it is accompanied by some form of logical argument such as freeing of the oppressed, creation of a master race, etc. Perhaps it is supported by a vocal cadre of men, women, and children urging on the conquest of the infidel, the bourgeois, the communist, etc. Whatever the rationale, the bad guy is defined, the good guy is identified, and the war is on.

The view of the enemy depends a great deal on the reason for the war. Initiators of the confrontation may see themselves as breaking the bonds of economic oppression, and thus "love" the victims but hate their leaders. They may see themselves as protectors of freedom, or religious soldiers, or any other manner of noble warrior who hates no one and who kills only so others may live. Or they may see themselves as simple killers, whose mercenary skills are listed on employment applications. Each of these groups, no matter what the rationale, kills people.

Soldiers sometimes adopt intense devotion to their own families, as though they receive some cooling balm from those relationships that makes their actions toward others less real. The intensity of "love" of family that accompanies combat is a prelude to the destruction of true love that is the inevitable result of war. Though it may appear love plays some part in the motivation for fighting, by its very nature love can only be a victim of warfare.

For those who understand love, it is not hard to condemn war as the opposite of love. It is less easy, however, to condemn the deterrence or containment of war. If, for example, the presence of nuclear arms prevents a war, can such weaponry be a tool of peace? Can someone threaten to destroy an entire nation out of love for its inhabitants? The answer must come from your understanding of love. What does appear true to me is that humankind will always have among it human beings whose choice of physical pleasures will lead them to war. The person who espouses disarming must accept that the consequence of doing so may literally be the death and/or subjugation of the majority of the human race. Indeed, the elimination of the nuclear weapons umbrella might return the world to confrontations between troops armed with conventional weapons that would kill and maim millions.

On the other hand, a world without weapons might be a world at peace. I am not suggesting that there could ever be a reason for actually using nuclear weapons, as opposed to the maintenance of a peacekeeping bluff. Nor am I suggesting love does not require an absolute rejection of use of any violence, I believe it does. What I am saying is that if we are to be honest with ourselves, we know that if we reject violence even in self-defense we must accept that the possible consequences include pain and death.

You never "have" to commit any violent act against another, it is always your choice to do so or not. If love requires rejection of all violence against another human being, as I believe it does, those who understand love should understand it is worth enduring pain in this life if accepting such pain leads to love, both now and in whatever existence follows death. Death followed by a joyful eternal life of love seems far superior to a pleasant life followed by a loveless eternity. We need to remember that no matter how hard we try to avoid our inevitable deaths, the fact is that we live lives that are no more than single grains among the infinite sands of time.

Indeed, even though the urge to change course when confronted with pain or death is incredible, it is not the choice to accept pain or death which may lead to misery, but rather it is the choice not to love that can truly destroy both your life on earth, and any possibility you may have of a joyous life after death. To trade love now, and perhaps forever, for more time for pleasures on earth may seem like a fine idea at the moment, but it is in fact the very worst choice anyone can make. If love is right, even one choice not to love is wrong, and may end in the loss of eternal love. We discuss this very difficult conclusion in more detail in the note *A Fanatic Life Or A Normal Life?*

Where are we? We have said that since existence may not end at death, you should live for the possibility you will continue to exist after your physical death and, in anticipation of that continued existence, you should do the best you can while you are alive. We said it is always your choice to love or not to love. We said that if you understand love you know that the best anyone can do for other people is to love them, therefore you should always choose love. We

said it is reasonable to believe life after death will offer eternal love for those who choose to love each other while on earth. We concluded that since each of us must die, it is totally right to love on earth and enter a "heaven" of never-ending love, even if choosing love brings physical death, and it is totally wrong not to love, even if not loving prolongs earthly life and pleasures.

Is It Bad To Be Not So Bad?

Good is good and bad is bad. I am not about to suggest all wrongs are equal, that cheating on an exam is as bad as murdering somebody, that watching an x-rated movie is as bad as rape, or that yelling at your spouse is as bad as beating them. What I do suggest is that all are bad. If you understand love you know if you choose to love you will do what is good for people, not what is bad. If one person is guilty of cheating and another is guilty of murder, it is in fact profoundly true that both have done wrong.

Yet no one loves all their lives, everyone chooses to give in to temptations sometime, even if it means just a quick look at a sex magazine or telling a lie to stay out of trouble. It may seem "unfair" (though it really is not), but once done even the slightest wrong can never be undone. You cannot uncheat a test, unmurder a victim, take back an argument, undo an affair, etc., etc., etc. We have, each and every one of us, done wrong. From the moment we commit our first wrong, it is clear that we can never return to the state of having done no wrong.

We have said you can choose to love any time you want to. This is true no matter what you have done in the past, and only requires that you want to love now. If you decide to love, what can you do about your past? The only thing that can be done is that you can be forgiven for having not loved. If you understand love, you know that if you love someone you will forgive them the wrongs they have done to you. Think carefully about love and forgiveness, and you will understand that if you love someone you will always and repeatedly and truly forgive them for having not loved you. If you love someone you will forgive them for everything they do to you and to other people.

The murderer who admits his wrong and asks forgiveness is perhaps better off than the cheat who denies he has done anything wrong and rejects any thoughts about needing forgiveness. If we have all done wrong, and if those who love forgive, should we not quit trying to keep score of each person's wrongs and merely forgive them when they seek forgiveness? If you love people, you will forgive them.

Can, and should, we forgive someone who does not want our forgiveness? Perhaps it is true that we cannot forgive someone unless and until they seek our forgiveness, perhaps not. Perhaps we cannot forgive someone unless and until they are willing to accept our forgiveness, perhaps not. Yet whether or not someone must seek forgiveness before they can be forgiven, does not in any way alter the fact that we can love someone who is our enemy, who hates us, and who does not want to be forgiven. If you know and understand the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul, you know and understand that you can and should love those who are your enemy and who hate you.

It is clear that if someone loves you and seeks your forgiveness, you can and should love them, and out of that love you will forgive them. No matter how many times they may ask you to forgive them, if they seek your forgiveness and you love them, you will forgive them. If you have completed your search and know and understand love, you also know and understand that if someone is your enemy and hates you, you can and should love them. If you love those people who hate you, and who do not want forgiveness, you will love them and do good to them, with the hope that they will choose to love you and seek forgiveness. You can and should love both those who love you and seek forgiveness, and those who hate you and do not seek forgiveness (we discuss later one exception to forgiveness).

I am not saying that every person who seeks forgiveness is sincere, perhaps most are not. I am not suggesting that forgiving someone who has murdered means giving them a knife and gun. I am saying that if you love someone you will tell them about love, so they will want to love and will want forgiveness. If you understand love you know what it means to love both those who seek forgiveness, and to love those who hate you and do not want to be forgiven. To love those who hate you and who laugh at forgiveness is perhaps the greatest test of your desire to love.

Men, Women, & Love

If you listen to people talking about love between men and women, you will quickly find that the love they describe may have only a slight, or even no, resemblance to the love you found when you searched your heart, mind, and soul. Many men and women sincerely believe love is a physical attraction between the sexes that somehow magically appears, must be cultivated by keeping the partner interested, and sometimes simply fades away. From the rush of adrenaline and the pounding heart which accompanies puppy love, to the passionate emotions of the "perfect" affair, most of humankind accepts, and in fact welcomes, the pleasant feelings of sexual thoughts and deeds.

All manner of sexual experiences are accepted without question. From the "innocent" enjoyment of a beauty contest, to the pleasures of casual sex, to unbelievable perversions, people enjoy whatever degree of sexual excitement their background and their "morals" will allow. Each of these indulgences is justified by some form of argument about sex being only natural, and feeling good being all right.

Even those whose ideas about love and marriage are more traditional are often lulled into what, for lack of a better description, may be called romantic love. The intense emotions that accompany any relationship, plus the pressures of society, combine to push people into playing stereotypical roles of dating. Men and women do the best they can to be interesting to each other, to make each other have a good time, and particularly not to rock the romantic boat. A general fear of being unpopular, of losing favor with another person, of being an oddball, runs through most people's minds.

When a man and a woman fall into playing "the game of love" they lose their identity as people who can truly love each other. Even though they may think what they are feeling is love for one another, it is more often infatuation with the romantic atmosphere and the idealized images of

themselves they have created. The question is asked with increasing frequency, can a man and a woman really love each other for the rest of their lives?

Think a few minutes about the love you found when you searched your heart, mind, and soul. Then think about giving that love to another person, and in return being loved by them. If you truly understand love, you will understand that true love can exist between any two people, and that true love between a man and a woman can exist. The love you find in your heart, mind, and soul is far more than physical attraction, or magical moments. It is the ultimate, joyful relationship between two people, where each person cares as much for the other person as for himself or herself. If you understand love, you know it is the deepest commitment one human being can give another.

If a man loves a woman, and a woman a man, when they look in each other's eyes they are not filled with lust, they are filled with love for each other. When their hands touch they are not filled with desire, they are filled with deep feelings of love. When they are with each other they know their love will not fade but will truly last their lifetimes. If they decide they want to spend the rest of their lives together as husband and wife, then they may choose to marry, and perhaps have a family. They may choose to live their lives, as many say, as if they were "one flesh".

Some readers will throw their hands up and exclaim what simplistic mishmash this is, life is nowhere near as easy as that, nor are human relationships that simple. Those who understand love know that what I am describing is far from simplistic. If you truly understand love, you will understand that the love I am describing is the basis of the deepest and most profound relationship two people can have. What makes these sentences sound naive and childish is the tendency of all of us to equate the word love with what we have been told love is. Novels, movies, poets, television, rock stars, friends, parents, teachers, have told us love is some sort of fragile entity which comes and goes with adversity and changes in the weather.

To people who only understand love in so limited and weak a form, the idea of deep and permanent love shared by two people seems a romantic absurdity. It is little wonder they find it almost impossible to believe true love can exist between a husband and a wife. Yet those who have completed their search and know and understand love, understand what it means to say that a man and woman who love each other and choose to marry become as "one flesh". They also know and understand why it is not said that the husband and wife become as "one being". They continue to be individual human beings, each one continues to have the independent choice to love people, or not to love people. When we say they become as "one flesh", we are not saying that they become as "one being", we are saying they continue to be two individuals united as if they are one by love.

I am not suggesting sex is evil, indeed having a family is one of the strongest expressions of love between two people who have chosen to marry and live their lives together as "one". What I am saying is that if two people truly love each other, they are not attracted to each other by desire for physical pleasure, they are brought together by love. When they are with each other, they have real, true, deep, love, in their hearts.

It is often difficult for people who have decided to marry to understand why it is wrong for them to express their love before marriage through sex. They see sex between two people who are truly committed to becoming as one with each other for the rest of their lives, as being far different from sex between people whose commitment may be something less, or none at all. There is no question it is the commitment that unites two people, and not the legal institution of marriage. Yet marriage is much more than a legal formality.

If marriage was measured by its legal utility it would be quite insignificant, fortunately it is more than the granting of a license. Marriage is the moment of final commitment when two people declare to the world and to themselves their love and their decision to live as one. By tradition it is the point in time when two people join together, yet more than tradition, it is when human beings who truly love one another know in their hearts that their commitment is complete. It is the single act of marriage that marks the combining of two lives.

Any physical joining between two people before this total commitment is complete, weakens forever the bond of love between them. On their wedding day, a person becomes one with someone they love, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and in a deeper sense we cannot describe. When two people have sex before this final expression of their commitment, the sex they enjoy is not part of the ultimate joining of two human beings. Sex before marriage is something less than the final confirmation of the decision to give a lifetime of love to another person. It robs people of that one moment in their lives that should be the beginning of their marriage. Those who engage in sex before marriage, even if they do so the night before a marriage that will last their lifetimes, will feel a loss of love, however slight, in their hearts.

Those who wait until they are married will find much more than physical pleasure. They will be engulfed by a unique sea of joyful emotions as love joins two people who, for the first time in their lives, are truly one with each other. Each of us has only one opportunity to experience that moment, yet we have hundreds of opportunities to lose that chance forever.

What we are saying does not in any way mean that those who have already lost that unique moment, cannot still choose to love people for the rest of their lives. Those of you who have had sexual relations outside marriage, can choose to love all people, now and for the rest of your lives. Perhaps you will have the opportunity to love and marry the person with whom you had sexual relations. If you do not have the opportunity to marry that person, it does not in any way change the fact that it is your choice to love people, or not to love them. From this moment on, it is your choice, and your choice alone, to love all people, and perhaps to marry one of them, or not to love. If you have not loved in the past, you can make the choice to give to all people, now and for the rest of your life, the true, pure, real, love you find in your heart, mind, and soul.

What about divorce? Again, the answer comes from truly understanding deep, real love. If a man and a woman choose to love each other and live their lives as one, what can make them change their minds? So long as two people choose to love each other they will never part. Remember, what we are talking about is true, deep love, not that which is called love but is only a shadowy illusion which fades in the light of dawn. We are talking about the love a husband can always choose to give a wife, and a wife can always choose to give a husband, love very few couples are willing to share.

Those who choose love don't fight over daily living, they are not annoyed by each other, they do not need to constantly worry about keeping their partner's love. They compromise, they try to understand each other's problems, and they support each other's efforts. They share love. Of course there will be problems and difficulties, yet they will face them together. Men and women who choose to love each other and become as one, will live the rest of their lives together as husband and wife.

But what if one spouse chooses not to love the other? If you understand love, you know that even if you are not loved you can love. You know that the answer to marital problems is not separating, but is for each spouse to choose to love the other. If one partner chooses not to love, their spouse should continue to love them and hope, even if it never happens, that they will once again be loved. A spouse who wants a divorce may make it impossible for the other person to live with them, or even to be near them, perhaps ever again, but that does not mean the rejected spouse should quit loving their husband or wife. Even if one spouse breaks the legal ties and leaves the other, their partner should continue to love them.

What about the millions of women and men who meet without any intention of marriage, what harm is there in the pleasure of a little sex among friends? The answer to that question is a difficult one that, at least for this and future generations, seems far harder to grasp than for previous generations. Indeed sex is not new, and perhaps casual sex was quietly practiced as much or more in the past as it is today, yet it was generally accepted that it was "not right". Today that idea has faded, and for many sex has become a popular sport.

The answer to the question of casual sex is not found in logical arguments, or in medical reports extolling the mental and physical benefits of an active sex life. It is found in an understanding of love. If you truly understand love, you understand what it means for a man and a woman to choose to love each other and live as one for their entire lives. If you understand love, you know that when two people who are not married choose to have sex, they are choosing the opposite of living together as one for life.

The ultimate purpose of sex in marriage is the creation of a new human life. Love between a husband and wife, conception and birth, and the giving of love to a child, makes sex far more than a physical act. All sexual acts and relationships entered into, not for the purpose of having a child, but rather for physical pleasure, or even emotional pleasure, subtly destroy the true love men and women can give each other, and weaken the real love all human beings can share. Having children is not only an expression of love between a man and a woman who choose to marry, it is an expression of love for the whole human race. Each child born as a result of the love of each spouse for the other, is born into and becomes part of a family filled with love. Each child born as a result of true love, adds to this world a family filled with people who truly love people.

When a husband and wife give to each other real, pure, true, love, having a child is the reason in their heart, mind, and soul for sexual relations, whether or not the purpose of having a child is or can be fulfilled. When physical or emotional pleasure from sexual relations is one of the goals of a human relationship, the true love that a man and woman who choose to marry and give birth to

a child can share is slowly destroyed. When a man and a woman, or for that matter two men or two women, seek physical or emotional pleasure from sexual relations with each other, they not only weaken their love for each other, they weaken their love for all people. Every sexual act that has pleasure as its goal, and not a child and family, renders sex less than an expression of love between spouses who are one with each other, and weakens our love of all people.

Yet the temptation of physical pleasure dims our resolve and muddies our recognition that to gain sexual pleasure, inside or outside marriage, love must be abandoned. Each time you choose sex instead of the lifetime of love that can be shared by a man and a woman who choose to marry and become as one, you not only reject love between you and your partner, but you reject love itself. Sex within marriage can be an expression of the love two people can give one another, every sexual act outside marriage denies that love.

It is hard to imagine how anyone could treat another person as an object from which they derive physical, or emotional, pleasure one moment, and the next moment love other people as human beings. The dehumanizing effect of sex for physical and emotional pleasure extends far beyond the moment and the relationship of the people involved, it follows them into their daily lives. Not loving even one person makes it difficult, or impossible, for someone to love all people. Each time someone chooses a moment of physical or emotional pleasure, it not only weakens their love for a wife or husband, it weakens their love for all people. Eventually they may not truly love anyone at all.

If you lust for someone, your love for them will grow weaker and weaker as physical and emotional pleasure replaces love. If you love someone you will have love for them, not lust, in your heart, mind, and soul. Remember, even if you have not loved in the past, you can make the choice to love now and for the rest of your life.

We have said that if two people love each other they will not have sexual relations with each other unless and until they choose to marry and live the rest of their lives as "one". We have concluded that lust and sex outside marriage destroys love, but that does not really answer the question of whether or not we should marry? If we truly love all people, is it possible that we should choose not to focus our love on one person, on a spouse? Is it possible that if we love all people, we should choose not to marry?

If we love a spouse the focus of much of our love will be turned toward them and away from other people. If we have a child we will focus our love on that child as we guide them through infancy to adulthood. I do not see how it is possible not to direct toward our spouse and child some of the love we would give to others if we did not have a spouse and child. Even if both of us want to love others, it would seem to be impossible for two who are "one" to give as much love to as many people as they would be able to give if they could go out into the world without having a spouse.

It seems likely that there will be times when we focus our love on our spouse and child, and will provide food, water, and clothing for our spouse and child, even if our neighbor is hungry, thirsty, and cold. Indeed, it seems true that there is no harm done if we never marry, no harm done to a child who is never conceived, yet there is harm done by focusing our love on a spouse

and child while other people need food, water, and our companionship. My conclusion is that if you choose to love all people with the love that, if it is to be given to one, must be given to all, you should not marry. This is a very difficult conclusion, yet I believe that if you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand love, you will reach the same conclusion.

I believe you will also reach the conclusion we discussed earlier, that if you do choose to marry, or you are already married, you will not divorce. This may seem contradictory, but it is not. By choosing not to marry, a person does not separate two people who have become as one. However, if a person divorces his or her spouse, they "tear apart" two people who have become as one. It seems intuitively true to me that a person who divorces their spouse will not continue to love that person with the love that we can and should give to all people. It seems that even though we should not marry, if we do choose to marry or we are married, we should not divorce (be sure to read the Notes "A Lesser Love" and "A Fanatic Life Or A Normal Life?" for more discussion on difficult topics).

What about the millions upon millions of people who most would conclude do not "lust" for each other, but who look at each other as being physically attractive, and who may "flirt" with each other? When the vast majority of people look at each other, at least to some extent they see each other as more or less physically attractive, as having a more or less pleasant personality, as being more or less desirable to be with, etc. Far beyond the question of sexual attraction, most human beings will tell you that they get along better with people who exhibit "compatible" personality traits. Indeed, most people have a group of "friends" they enjoy being with. It seems that people like to be around people who make them "feel good". Is there anything wrong with that?

If when you look at someone you are looking for something in them that makes you feel good, whether that may be "innocent" sexual attractiveness or delightful conversation or something else, you are not giving them the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul. If you love someone, when you look at them you do not have thoughts about their physical appearance. If you love someone, you do not think about what their personality is like. If you love someone, you do not have thoughts about whether or not you want to be around them and be their friend. If you love someone, you do not have thoughts about whether or not they make you "feel good". If you love someone, when you look at them you have love for them in your heart, mind, and soul.

If you give someone true, pure, real, love, you will love them, and you will not think of them as someone you do or do not want to be around. You will love all people, including those who other people consider to be ugly or dull or stupid or inferior. When you look at them you will not see someone who is sexually attractive or vivacious or funny or popular, you will see someone you love. When you look at them you will not see someone who is ugly or dull or stupid or inferior, or anything else, you will see someone you love. If you give to everyone, the true, pure, real, love that is in your heart, mind, and soul, they will be more than your friends, they will be your family who you love.

Doubts

There is one thing that if it is true may be interpreted as shaking the foundations of my beliefs. This potential nemesis, which may render my life and thoughts useless, is found in the question of whether or not the vision of love some of us find within ourselves truly reveals the full nature of human love. We have discussed the desirability of true love as opposed to hate, or even to simply not loving, and have pled for all to love one another. The cloud on my horizon comes when, being by nature and choice a very logical and perhaps a rather "cold" human being, I see intense, passionate "love" between people which may seem to render less real and anemic my concept of love.

If I was simply asked to describe that set of human emotions which may drive one human being to heady, irrational, and "total" commitment to another human being, even to the point of deeply hurting friends, children, or spouses, I would never label such emotions "love". Having never experienced such passions, and being unlikely ever to do so, I have always dismissed them as fueled by shallow desires, fostered and encouraged by people whose object was far from "love". To suggest true love might exist between people having an "affair" attacks the very foundation of my beliefs about such love.

Yet I have witnessed the pain that some of my friends went through when they reached the end of one of those forbidden relationships. The pain I saw in a special few of them was so intense I could not at the time say with great conviction that they did not really love the other person. It frightens me to think intense love for another might bring pleasure as intense as the pain it can inflict, pleasure which might make our vision of true love between people seem not a very desirable goal at all. I can, of course, never really know what my friends felt, but I know that at the time I did not feel as comfortable as I once had declaring their passionate romances loveless.

What is particularly disturbing to me is that we can predict such an absolute advantage for intense, passionate love, over what we have called true love, in only two ways. The first downgrades love to being only one of many positive human emotions. If we are the product of our biologic instincts, directed and modified but not altered by rational thought, then we should expect the ultimate positive experience of an individual to be filled with emotional lightning. Such "love" is not at its best when given to everybody, nor is it any less strong when it is between those for whom loving means destroying others. It is love which, if not properly described as self-centered, must at least be limited to a few, for by its nature it is an intense, often physical, always personal, experience only a few can share.

It elevates the role of sex in a relationship, and downgrades the importance of fidelity (though perhaps only to a point). It may even make divorce desirable, and suggests love is but one transient emotion to be supplemented by other physical and mental pleasures. The implications are far reaching, and none bode well for hopes of love among all people. Applying this logic, a person who loves all people may not have reached a desirable goal. Indeed, the pragmatism of such love gives added strength to the nihilists cry that nothing really matters.

The second way of explaining why what we have described as true love may not be as desirable as passionate "love", is simply to note what I find in my heart, mind, and soul to be true love may not be. Perhaps generations of philosophical, theological, and psychological thinkers who have modified concepts of true love to include all manner of things outside my ideas of such love

are right, and I am wrong. If so, perhaps those of you who possess deep and real emotions will, when you search your very being, learn more about what true love is than those of us who are rather cold and analytical.

Even if my ideas of love are naive, it is hard for me to believe there is nothing special about the unique and intense and "good" nature of the love I see when I look at those who love. Even if passionate love is a desirable part of human love, it may still be quite possible for all people to love one another with a more complex, but still true, love. If such is the case, a world filled with love may indeed still be the one world worth living for.

One quick comment should be made, when I say my friends experienced passionate love I am not in any way talking about a casual, merely physical, experience. What I am talking about is intense and apparently real and lasting commitments between human beings. I am in no way suggesting the vast majority of personal relationships that masquerade as loving ones have any love in them at all. Anyone who has experienced only the shallow emotions of passionate love should take no comfort in my discussion of whether passionate love may, in a few special cases, be real love.

Now, the hard part, explaining why I still do not believe that the intense, passionate love of my friends was and is the real, true love we should seek. I do not suggest the intensity of passionate "love" does not bring to its participants incredible pleasure, pleasure beyond the physical, pleasure which would perhaps be the goal of all humankind were it not for that which must be lost in gaining it. For even though I have tried and tried and tried and tried to imagine the coexistence of what we have called passionate love with that which we have called true love, it seems to me they cannot exist together in one human being. A person who chooses to give passionate love to another person, cannot also choose to give true love to all people. Passionate love overwhelms true love, it demands that people do that which they would not do if they loved all people.

The love I found when I searched my heart, mind, and soul, love every person can give every other person, may not bring with it the "emotional high" passion offers, yet it is an all consuming love which becomes part of a person's very being. Though it may lack the emotional fever that accompanies passionate romance, the transformation that occurs when a human being chooses to love all people gives that person love which does not appear and disappear, brighten and fade. It is love that is with them and comforts them every moment of their lives. A love that does not focus its energy on one or two people, but rather a love that spreads out from a person and grows and strengthens as it radiates into the world. That love, whether it is called ideal or pure or true, or just called love, is more intense than any love I can imagine.

Indeed, while it is true the love between two people who love all people is clearly different to the explosive passion of two lovers for whom the rest of the world does not exist, I believe it is in fact far more intense and beautiful and joyous. Only a man or a woman who gives real, pure, true love to all people can give real, pure, true love to each individual person.

Only those who give real, true, pure, love to all human beings can give that kind of love to another human being. Only those who understand and give pure, selfless, true love to all human

beings can give that kind of love to each other. The love that fills the very being of those who choose to love all people, fills every moment of their lives with love only they understand, love only they can give. The person for whom love must be a passionate emotional experience shared by a few does not understand and cannot give to anyone the all-consuming love which lies within them. They have locked fellow human beings out of their hearts, minds, and souls and thus have lost the love that, if it is given to anyone, must be given to all.

I may have clouded the understanding of love you found within yourself by discussing ideas of "passionate love" (and perhaps have discouraged and muddled the resolve of those who have not yet searched for that understanding). If and when you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, you will know and understand love. You must use all the understanding of love that is in your heart, mind, and soul when you consider if some other "love" may be better. An understanding of pure love brings with it a belief that we should love each and every person. I have no doubt that if you know and understand the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul, you will know that the best you can do in life is to love all people. You will know that no love is better than the true, real, pure, love every human being can give to every other human being. You will know and understand that "passionate love" is "cold" and "empty" when compared to the true, real, pure, love, you can give to all people. You will know and understand that the true, pure, love, you can choose to give to all people, is the only love worth living for. Any doubts I may have had have vanished. Any doubts you may have will vanish when you complete your search and know and understand real, true, pure, love.

What will those who choose to love all people find when they go out into the world? It is impossible to say what those who choose love will find when they venture into a world full of people who don't even know what love is. For those who do not marry the pressures of passionate romance may grow. Only an understanding of the loss of true love that is the inevitable consequence of passionate love will help them hold on to true love of all people.

Where does this leave us? It leaves me with the conclusion that no matter how fantastic and real a passionate romance may be, it can never be worth choosing over the love you find in your heart, mind, and soul, your very being. It leaves me with a belief that "pure" love in the human heart, mind, and soul really does exist and is the one true, real, and good love that can and should be shared by all. It leaves me convinced that loving all people was not only worth discussing, but is worth living for.

The question is often asked, do human beings have sufficient capacity to truly love everybody? The answer is not an easy one for the amount of energy loving takes from you, if not replenished by being loved, is enormous. Even if you love only one person such love can be draining, and the demands on you increase dramatically as you spread your love among all people. If you love all people, does that weaken the love you give to each person?

If you give most or all of your love to one or two people, you may not have enough love left for other people. But if you love all people, something amazing happens. If you love all people you will not focus your love on one or two, you will give your love to everyone. When you love all people, the limits you placed on your love are released, and your love grows to an extent you

never thought possible. When you share your love with all people you will find that you have plenty of love for each of them.

The true, pure, love you can give to each person is love that you can give only if you love all people. It is love that cannot be focused on one or two without being weakened or destroyed. It is love that blossoms and blooms and expands and grows as it is given to more and more and more people. You will find that when the love that was locked in your heart, mind, and soul is given freely to all people, you will have more than enough love to give to each and every person.

Why You Do What You Want To Do

Why would anyone choose not to love? Why does a person show off his or her diamonds to friends who can't meet their house payments? Why do employees do everything they can to make sure they get a promotion instead of fellow workers? Why do people lie their way through tight spots, blaming every mistake on someone else? Why do people read in the newspaper every cruel detail of a violent rape? Why does a person have an affair with someone else's wife? Why do they party through the night, drinking until they pass out? Why do they gamble away the family grocery money? Why do they periodically indulge themselves in their favorite form of "orgy", sexual or otherwise?

Why do they rape? Why do they torture? Why do they kill? The questions are endless. The possibilities are as numerous as all the schemes and plots and cruelties and fantasies and perversions the human mind can imagine. The answers are as numerous. They range from "normal instinctive human behavior" to "environmentally aggravated hereditary mental disease". Those who shudder at the acts of someone else often offer explanations that seek to explain how people are "led" into aberrant behavior. Each commentator tries to define and isolate the unacceptable behavior, whether it is some form of sexual perversion or shoplifting or murder. The behavior is seen as a clear deviation from the norm, which can be traced to childhood traumas, social/economic pressures, impressionable minds, etc. When other explanations prove absurd, behavior is often attributed to the catchall "they must be crazy".

I am not prepared to reject the possibility that organic mental disease, and perhaps even non-physical psychological trauma, cause, or contribute to, much of the horrors of the world. In fact, researchers can bring on the most perverse behavior by artificially stimulating the brain with chemicals or electricity. However I am convinced that the vast majority (perhaps all) of human behavior is not determined by external or internal forces acting on the mind, but rather by conscious human choice among more or less clear alternatives.

I am not saying biophysical urges to gamble, drink, have sex, etc., do not exert incredible pressures to act and not think. I realize they are major factors on which we base our decisions. Nor am I saying peer group pressures and lifetime experiences unique to each person's surroundings (in the broadest sense, including teachers and relatives, as well as neighborhoods, etc.) do not exert incredibly strong pressures. What I am saying is neither heredity nor environment nor a combination of both is adequate to explain human behavior.

If a person does not get pleasure from a perverse act, they will not do it. That basic common sense statement, however seemingly true it may appear, has fostered centuries of controversy. Early religious thinkers, and many humanistic philosophers as well, accepted the general proposition that each of us is in control of our behavior. Later generations of scientists saw in such statements a sociopolitical attempt to justify repression of beliefs and lifestyles practiced by any group in a numerical and/or political minority. The scientists virtually ignored the idea that some sort of meaningful individual free will process is involved in decision making, and instead adopted a deterministic approach to human behavior, which described nearly every human action in terms of heredity and external influences.

We have already discussed the idea of human freewill, no one is going to prove free will exists, or that it does not. Your belief about your freewill ability to choose among alternatives is a question of what you believe, or have faith, is true. Yet even those scientists who would answer affirmatively if asked whether humans have a free will, curiously choose sides in the heredity vs. environment controversy, as if freewill plays an insignificant role in decision making.

I believe both hereditary-physiological and environmental-psychological factors are real, and play a crucial, critical role in the human decision making process. However, I believe the controversy over which is "controlling" misses the real point that neither are "controlling". Each influence human beings to a degree that varies from individual to individual. Perhaps many individuals who do not understand such influences are affected to the extent their decisions become virtually automatic, perhaps not. Regardless of the relative strengths of heredity and environment on human beings, I believe the "controlling" factor in the human decision making process is the definitionally illusive freewill choice. Those who seem to respond automatically to hereditary and environmental pressures do so simply because they have not chosen to do otherwise.

While a significant number of scientists champion various forms and degrees of determinism, in reality, I doubt the majority would argue strongly against the proposition of free will ability to alter conduct. For one thing, to do so virtually takes away any claim of uniqueness for the human species, the species of which all scientists are members. For another, there appears to exist deep within us a feeling of control over our decisions. That feeling does not prove you can make free will choices, but it does not weaken any faith or belief we may have in the existence of free will.

Since we have said we cannot prove or disprove the existence of free will, the fact you feel a sense of ultimate control should tend to strengthen your belief in free will, and is as positive evidence for such belief as you are likely to find. So is the answer to the question "why do people do what they do" simply that they do what they want to do? With the possible exception of those driven by compulsions truly beyond their ability to control, if such compulsions actually exist, the simple answer is people do what they want to do. If you agree, as I do, with those who believe that people have the free will ability to make choices and decisions, you should have little problem agreeing that if you have a choice to do or not to do something harmful to another person, and doing it does not give you pleasure, you will not do it.

But how can anyone want to rape or kill somebody? Even the most sheltered human beings experience, at some time and to some degree, the feelings of physical pleasure that come from

sexual fantasies, dreams of wealth, desires to beat an opponent to a pulp. Most of us have led less sheltered existences and, to varying degrees, know the pleasure of being slightly drunk, of winning the daily double, of an x-rated movie, etc., etc. The list of physical pleasures is long, and for some the degree of intensity of pleasure associated with them seems to increase as their acceptability in society goes down. Yet you know that most people could get no satisfaction from a violent or perverse act, how then can human beings who do violence to other human beings enjoy what they do?

The answer lies in the absolute opposite natures of love and, what for want of any better description, we will call physical pleasure. When you love somebody the last thing you want to do is hurt them. You may choose to "love" some people, but use others for your own pleasure. That pleasure may be sexual, or perhaps may be the feeling of power that can come from being boss and master, or may be any other pleasure that is enjoyed at someone else's expense. You choose physical pleasure when you do any of the millions of possible acts you would not do if you loved people. As you "love" fewer and fewer people, and give less "love" to those people you do love, you get further and further and further away from love.

Even though we may leave love behind, most of us never get so far away that we no longer feel the physical and mental pain which goes with not loving others. When two people who have lost sight of love get together they may enjoy physical pleasures with only a slight and distant feeling something is missing and wrong. Yet for those people there is always a limit to the "pain" they will inflict on another human being. They may not realize such a limit exists, but it does, and it results in their pleasure being cut off by the increasing emotional or physical "pain" of others.

Yet some choose to go so far in their quest for physical pleasure that love becomes distant, unknown, and unwanted. Among those who choose such an existence are people who seek only their own pleasure, pleasure that not only does not diminish, but is enhanced by the pain of others. When love becomes a word without meaning to someone, people that they meet are no longer "people", they are literally objects, deserving no more than an animal. As more and more people become like animals to a person, so too the one who dehumanizes is dehumanized. No one can continue to consider himself or herself to be something unique and special if they consider others as mere objects of pleasure. Such people, unhampered by feelings of love, can do virtually anything that gives them physical pleasure, without any remorse for the pain inflicted on fellow "animals".

It is hard for people who may not truly love, but who have not come close to abandoning love, to understand the physical pleasures of rape, murder, and all the other horrible perversions imaginable. Yet everyone should realize that people who have virtually abandoned love, and thus have almost no limits on their actions, actually do get pleasure from the perverse. If they did not get pleasure from their acts, they would not do them. (Beyond the people who have distanced themselves from love, are those who have totally rejected and abandoned love, they are discussed in another note.)

Again what we have said comes with the caveat that, among those people who are unable to control some of their actions, perhaps there exists a group of people who cannot choose not to harm others. One can never be sure how many, if any, fall in that group. Since most of us retain

at least some of our sensitivity to the pain of others, we tend to label as "crazy" anyone who acts without regard to such pain. Perhaps some people are compelled to do that which harms others, perhaps not. Perhaps (as I believe), everyone, including those who are "crazy", can choose love, perhaps not. What we can say is that those who harm others and who are not "crazy" choose to do whatever brings them the physical pleasure they seek with conscious, reasoned, contempt for the pain of others.

I should emphasize that I am in no way suggesting that those who have distanced themselves from love but not totally rejected it cannot reverse course and choose love (again, the possibility of totally rejecting love is discussed in another note). Indeed those people who are engaged in perverse human depravities, but who have not totally rejected love, may at any time choose to love people for the remainder of their lives. Conversely, many who would never dream of committing rape may choose to continue to "enjoy" newspaper accounts of rapes, never losing sight of what love is, yet never choosing to love. Those people continue to be what the former rapist was.

What I am trying to emphasize is that people choose not to love, not because loving makes them feel bad, but because the alternative to loving is physical pleasure which is real and intense and lasting. Those who think that people who choose the perverse don't know what they are doing are kidding themselves. Most, if not all, have made a conscious decision to enjoy physical pleasures at the expense of love. Anyone who wants to understand the millions of people who do millions of acts against love needs to remember those acts give them pleasure. They also need to realize that as long as we live in a hedonistic world, such pleasures will continue to be real, intense, and available to all who choose to enjoy them.

As long as you are busy with the normal routines of life, such pleasures seem remote and less than real. If you risk getting closer to the pleasures, you will find yourself beginning to tingle with an unexpected but pleasant sense of anticipation. If you let yourself go, you will literally be engulfed in a whirlpool of rapidly intensifying feelings that draw you deeper and deeper into mindless enjoyment of the moment.

Those who have not experienced the electricity of physical pleasure, or who might not anticipate the power of a particular experience, are likely to find themselves alternately condemning the moment and wanting it to be more intense. They might justify their actions by promising themselves they will reform immediately after this time; by declaring they are too weak to resist; or, even worse, by asserting that some intellectual insight shows them the overall social desirability of their behavior. It should be noted that those who have experienced the depths of physical pleasures usually describe a sort of disappointment, emptiness, or other negative feeling, which, over time, invades their bliss. This feeling of loss is combated by shaking it from their minds with the help of drugs or alcohol or mind-blanking self-induced euphoria, or by doing a little something different, or by going just a little bit further.

At one time or another most people choose physical enjoyment over love, and some live their entire lives for pleasure. Yet most carry with them an understanding of the dark side of physical pleasure that is an inseparable part of such pleasures. Someone who toys with those pleasures may only glimpse the darkness that accompanies them, and may indeed be able to ignore the

feeling within that something is wrong. In fact they may be able to deaden their feelings of love so much that they live their entire lives enjoying physical pleasures while ignoring the inevitable destruction of their lives, as well as the lives of those around them.

The enjoyment of "physical pleasures" is far more pervasive than most people recognize. Have you ever considered the fact that newspapers seldom detail a burglar's entry into a home, or the details of a simple traffic ticket, but practically always go into great detail about rapes and murders. Have you ever noticed the extreme detail in news reports about wars and war machines. That detail, of course, is not accidental. Regardless of claims of news value, it serves no other purpose than to provide a source of perverse, supposedly "harmless", physical pleasure for the reader. Just as the act itself is harmful, the pleasant feelings of morbid curiosity are also harmful.

Those who fantasize about sexual pleasures, perhaps watching an R rated movie or a pro-football half time, are rejecting love as surely as someone who is having an affair with his neighbor's wife. Those who "enjoy" newspaper or television accounts about war, crime, etc., are choosing physical pleasure over love. Love does not come from a person's acts and deeds, but from inside their heart, mind, and soul. If a person is filled with love, their thoughts will be thoughts of love, and their deeds will be deeds of love. I am not suggesting evil thoughts do not cross the minds of those who love, what I am saying is that such thoughts are not welcomed by them. Nor am I suggesting it is no worse to have an affair than it is to see an R rated movie, what I am saying is that those who love do neither. Just as it is not right to kill someone, it is not right to fantasize about killing someone who wrongs you. Just as it is not right to have sexual relations with someone for physical pleasure, it is not right to replace thoughts of love with sexual fantasies. Fantasies of lust and power and money replace feelings of love with dreams of physical pleasure, weakening the love between people. Thoughts about "physical pleasures", sexual or otherwise, are the opposite of thoughts of love, and crowd more and more love out of our heart, mind, and soul.

If you have searched your heart, mind, soul, your very being, and know and understand love, then you know that choosing physical pleasure is the opposite of choosing love. If and when you truly know and understand love you will understand that choosing physical pleasure destroys love. Each moment that you choose physical pleasure could have been a moment that you chose love. When you truly know and understand love you will know and understand that you should always choose love.

You're Not Normal If You Think I'm Not Normal

What about those people who go through life "just living"? One of the great mistakes in life is to focus attention on those who openly indulge in the perverse, or obviously hedonistic, pleasures of life, while giving only fleeting attention to the vast majority of people who live in that quite, almost invisible world of "normalcy". Within this great mass of humanity lies the borderline between love and no love. The boundary separating these two groups divides not only those who occupy the extremes of life, but also marks the real and absolute division between those whose love, or lack of love, is hidden by daily living. Whether or not a clear and "visible line" can be discerned by people, or even exists, I believe there is a real and absolute division so that at every moment in your life it is true you are either a member of the group that loves, or you belong to

the group that does not. If it is your choice to love or not, then making that choice determines at every moment which group you belong to. Though some disagree, I believe those who understand love know that the borderline exists, even if it is beyond human ability to locate.

Either you choose to love and belong to the group that loves, or you do not choose to love and belong to the group that does not love. This is not to say that passage between groups is restricted during your lifetime, for it appears it is not. If we are to continue to assume it is your choice to love or not to love, then passage among the groups depends on that choice, and is apparently prohibited only to those who have totally rejected love. Perhaps those who love and who do not love are not even "defined" as a "group" before death, perhaps they are. Whether they are or not, at any one point in time, and thus every moment of our lives, we either love or we do not love. Many variations of this proposition of a division between people exist, including ideas about a "purgatory" from which escape is possible even after death. While the groups are described differently by different cultures and religions, most end up as two clear, separate, and distinct, masses, which, sometime before or after death, are forever fixed and unchanging.

The vast majority of "normal" people appear to give little thought as to which group they belong to. They seem rather indifferent to the presence among them of the borderline, yet the existence of the line and their choice of sides determines the very nature of their being. A normal person exists among a huge mass of fellow normal people who embrace, protect, and shield him or her from the world around them. The peer group discourages thoughts and concerns about what the members as a whole stand for, what the individual really believes in, and where the group is headed.

The routines of daily life that guide a normal person (and guide you if you are "normal") appear to be one of the strongest anesthetics of all time. The products of a normal person's labors include responsible corporate positions, attractive suburban houses, sensible cars, extensive charitable activities, active participation in church affairs, union membership, solid family ties, etc. All contribute to the individual's feeling that they are comfortably situated among, and a solid member of, the normal people of the world.

The output of the normal person's mind bombards his or her fellow human beings through newspapers, televisions, shows, theaters, books, advertisements, conversations, interviews, etc., with the message that the normal person's values, behavior, likes, dislikes, ideas, and lifestyles, are not only acceptable, but are right, good, normal, healthy, and desirable. As each member moves through familiar streets, shops, offices, and homes, the whole structure of normal society reinforces a belief that they and their peers are the foundation and strength of the society of which they are a part. Each reflection of the normal life, as seen by every member as they look at other members, solidifies their belief that they are what they should be.

To do that which is not normal brings immediate reaction from those around you. To persist in doing that which is the exception and not the rule focuses all the pressure society can bring to bear on the rebellious member. If a member's public behavior does not rapidly conform to at least the minimum requirements of normalcy, they find themselves outside the group, which seems to huddle closely together and shrink from them with the intention of not only banning them forever, but their ideas as well. With the increase of tolerance in modern society, this

process has become muted and less obvious, however it is still a basic tool of society. While friendships may now be tolerated among normal people and "outcasts", the bond of membership remains coldly and cruelly destroyed, preventing exchange and acceptance of ideas.

A curious state of mind accompanies normal life, it is as if a restful, peaceful cloud surrounds and deadens human feelings, isolating each person from every other person's problems. A day may be spent with a "normal" amount of concern for others, even with a few shining moments of human compassion interspersed among scheduled routines. Yet the cloud of normalcy engulfs the mind and senses, making those moments no more than rare attempts at loving. The sense of people loving people is missing.

The frightening thing about normalcy is that it carries with it a sense of right, which is the logical result of the sequence of intense socializing pressures that accompany normal growth. This myopic view of life is virtually devoid of the influence of love. Even worse is the conviction of most normal people who have not searched their heart, mind, and soul to understand love, that they not only know what it means to love, but that they are indeed loving, caring individuals. The narcotic effect of normalcy renders those who do not throw aside the strong beliefs instilled by years of normal living and replace them with an understanding of love, slaves of their perfectly logical but loveless lives.

Though you may find it difficult to comprehend, all manner of philosophical beliefs from Nazi fascist superiority to Marxist revolution, right-wing militaristic conservatism to left wing social upheaval, sexual liberation to fanatic isolation of women from society, all can be argued for, intelligently supported, and devotedly engaged in, by people who have total conviction in the "rightness" of their ideas and acts. Indeed, a "normal" person often exhibits unquestioning acceptance of the "goodness", and perhaps even superiority, of their group's values and lifestyle.

General beliefs and traditions of whatever group or groups one identifies with (whether ethnic, social, political, economic, intellectual or otherwise) mold, and may distort, the personal ideas each of us spend lifetimes developing and nurturing. Group ideas are so much a part of our lives that they become for us truths which we not only must live by, but which we are duty bound to defend and propagate. Group beliefs are absorbed by individual minds, so that each of us lives our life, more or less intensely according to the nature of our beliefs, as if we, and the other members of our group, are the only ones who know how life should be lived.

There is another kind of pressure to conform to a "normal" routine, an internal pressure that few of us recognize. Each of us inherits millions of biological "traits" from our parents, who in turn inherited millions of traits from their parents, etc. Some of us inherit better math skills, some greater artistic ability, some more athletic dexterity, etc. Some of us are, from birth, calmer, more emotional, faster, slower, smarter, musically inclined, etc. As clearly as our environment is for us an external definition of a "normal" world, our heredity is an internal definition of a "normal" world. For many, this inherited "normal" world can be a far stronger anesthetic than the "normal" world offered by a somewhat detached environment.

Many, many people live their lives, from birth to death, blindly following the path that heredity provides for them. Those who are more emotional may be easily angered and lash out at family

members, those who are less emotional may be apathetic toward the needs of others, etc. Each person who follows the hereditary forces at work within them, "feels" that they are doing what they do because they are who they are. For most, it is far more difficult to recognize that they are intentionally following an ancient biologic roadmap, than it is to simply believe that they are just being "themselves". Indeed, many deny that they are "like" their parents, only to eventually see an image of their parents' lives when they look in the mirror. They fail to realize and admit to themselves that, in many ways, they are willing clones of their ancestors.

Yet the traits that we inherit are just that, they are traits that cause us to have a "tendency" to make certain choices. While our hereditary traits may exert incredible internal pressure on us to make particular choices, the choices we make are none-the-less our own free will choices. Our choices are not automatic, they are not determined by our heredity or environment, unless we allow them to be. Our choice to follow our hereditary or environmental path is our free will choice not to do otherwise. If heredity or environment dictate our choice, it is because we have not been willing to recognize the influence of our biologic heritage and our surroundings, and because we have not been willing to make our own free will choices that transcend heredity and environment. Admittedly, it may be incredibly hard not to follow the path our heredity and environment dictates for us, yet it is clear that we can make our own free will choices, we can make our own path.

We have criticized normalcy as if it was a universal plague whose victims are unaware of the pain it inflicts. There is another way of looking at it. We can view normalcy as model behavior determined by a more or less democratic combination of biologic, environmental, intellectual, and other characteristics of human existence. What is normal is normal because it works "best" in the given situation. For example, the normal routine for a particular office worker is adapted from time tested routines for similarly situated employees. It is followed by a worker not only because his or her ability to perceive alternatives has been numbed, but also because the normal routine serves them well. Thus when we suggest you break free from the restraints of normalcy, it is very important that you be committed to understanding love. For if you do not replace your normal routine with true love, you will have simply given up the companionship and comfort of normal people for some lonely individualism, which in the long run will prove no better for you.

Perhaps most of us need a degree of "normalcy" where we follow routines that add stability to our lives. While it is wrong to hide among the majority of normal people who blend into the group to avoid doing what is right, it does not follow that one must stand apart from the crowd. There is certainly nothing wrong in being with people. Being distant and cold, separating yourself from society, is the opposite of loving. It is one thing to be alone because you are the only person in a group who is willing to love, but it is quite the opposite to be alone because you are afraid or unwilling to love. What is required is that you love people with the hope that all will join together in a community where it is "normal" to love. To help build such a normal existence filled with love for all, whether or not you succeed, should be your goal.

Lonely Islands In A Sea Of Normalcy

Individualism is in many ways the opposite of being a member of a group of "normal" people. The more isolated and sheltered we are from people while growing up, whether by barriers

erected by protective parents, or by our own fears or personality, the more likely we are to expect our lives and the people in them to behave according to an individual plan we construct in our minds. The greater our separation from people, the more we transform them into characters in plays we author in our minds, expecting each person we meet to take their place in our script and to faithfully play the role we have written for them. For the vast majority, on opening night or soon thereafter, the players get restless, the lines muddled, and the show slides downhill like a melodrama that just won't work. As the story starts to fall apart, we find the fault to be with others. The simple problem is every actor is also a writer, and writers seldom write the same story.

People who grow up close to other people learn at an early age that very few do what other people expect them to do, no matter how "right" or "good" it may seem. Those who understand the complexities of human beings are not surprised when things go totally opposite to what they plan, and want. The many, many people who for some reason have not been close enough to others to really understand this are at the very least repeatedly hurt, and at worst devastated, by the "failure" of others. They often seek solitude and peace in an individualistic world of dream lovers and dream successes, a world where what they want to happen does happen.

Anyone who thinks only a few people fit that description does not realize that the world of dreams can be as subtle as the escape offered by television, movies, books, and particularly, as subtle as acceptance of the rhythm of daily lives filled with repetitious "normal" patterns of living. Just as being "normal" can make us part of a group, a veneer of "normalcy" can help us hide within a group, relieve us from the need to get to know other people, and protect us from hurt and disappointment. Some will never wake from their individual dreams, others will be awakened only to find themselves in the nightmare of a loveless reality they never dreamed existed.

Is escape all that bad? Without some release from reality, the pressures of living would perhaps be too great for all but a few. Yet if we are to bring love into our lives, we cannot ignore the very real obstacles to love that can only be dealt with in the harsh reality of life. Someone who is always looking for a romantic prince or princess will reject the real people around them who bring with them some pain, but who also could be people the person could love and be loved by. To hold back waiting for the storybook ending is to abandon the real, pure, and true love you can choose to give to people, and to reject the love, however imperfect, people are willing to give you. If we are to be more than observers of life we cannot seek only those who are "perfect", for it is likely that we will never find anyone who comes anywhere close to being "perfect". We must love people, even if we are not loved, and be willing to accept the inevitable and repeated rejection and defeat of a real world where love plays but a small part.

It would be great if I could tell you that it is likely this world will someday become a world filled with people loving people, but I can't. Love is the guiding force for only a few, a multitude of other goals control most lives. Often those who would choose love if they understood the choice are prisoners of their lack of understanding. What about those who understand and choose love, what can we expect from them? Those who understand love and choose to love you now, may, at some time in the future, choose not to love you. This leaves us with the possibility of a world filled with forgiving love that does not demand perfection, yet even that love is rarely seen.

Perhaps the best we can ever expect is a world where each of us is willing to recognize and accept that life is filled with imperfections and hatred and cruelties and loneliness, yet also recognize and accept that no matter what the world is like, each of us can choose to love one another. A world where some choose to love, while others do not, is not an easy one to live in, yet given the nature of human existence, it is the best we can expect. Many of those who say they love you, don't, and are eventually going to hurt you. Some who love you one minute, will choose not to love you the next, but that rejection of love is part of human behavior. It does not have to be, but it is, and it will continue to be so as long as people choose among all the multitude of pleasures that compete against love. No matter what other people do, whether they love you or not, you can always choose to love them. When you understand true love, you will know that you should always choose to love people, even if you are not loved by them.

Perhaps the cloud of living can never be pierced until a person knows and understands true love, for each and every idea and belief that can be convincingly argued for and that can pass all manner of manmade tests, may fail only when tested against true love. Many are sincere when they declare their intentions to help their fellow human beings, yet if people should love each other, they cannot really help anyone until they understand and give true love. It is difficult to describe the state of consciousness most of us live in, for that consciousness argues against anything that might awaken us.

I see a distinct difference between those who truly understand love and those who either think they do, or think they have discovered something more important than love. That distinction is clear only to those who truly know and understand love. Yet that which blinds those who think they understand love, but in fact do not, also makes it far, far more difficult for them to see any need to question their beliefs, let alone to search their heart, mind, and soul for that which they believe they have already found. Most people will never recognize that their lives and beliefs may need exploring and changing. The great danger to humanity is not any possibility that those who seek an understanding of love will not find it, but rather that most people will never complete their search.

Those who do not understand love often do not understand the need to understand love. The horror is that masses of people will live their lives following invisible patterns, without ever allowing themselves to question their reason for living, and will die without ever having sought an understanding of love. The solution? There is only one, and that is for you to search your heart, mind, soul, your very being, and know and understand love.

At the start of our discussion we asked you to put aside your questions about love until you completed your search, and knew and understood love. The answers to those questions, and the millions of other questions you will face throughout your life, can come only from your understanding of the difference in what most people mean when they use the word love, and in the love you found in your heart, mind, and soul. I have yet to find a single question that does not have real, true, pure, love as part of the answer. Those whose experience with "love" has been bad, those whose response to hate has been anger, those for whom love is simply one of several human emotions, none have understood and given the true love that is inside them. Those who understand love know why we have said that you should love even if you are not loved.

If you have completed your search of heart, mind, and soul you already know the answer to the most difficult of questions. You know that choosing to love people is part of the answer to every question. Whether you realize it or not, you also know the rest of the answer, which we will discuss next.

Forever

If you understand love you know that if anything in life is worth living for, it is for people to love, really and truly love, people. Yet if death is the end, what use is it to love anyone? If death is indeed the end of your existence, then love and hate and you and I and life are all transient puffs of smoke in an ultimately inanimate eternity. Even love will succumb to death, making its apparent beauty no more lasting than a winter's snow.

We really do not know, and will not know, what lies in store for us beyond the grave until the inevitable moment of death arrives. If life and love end at the grave we will never know the answer for we will no longer exist, and thus the question will die with us. Of course, as we have said, such an end would be the ultimate in painlessness, for it would take with it all the sad and glad and in between experiences of your lifetime. If you no longer are, you no longer are, period. The void that follows death without a life after death is a complete and total void. There would be no one to experience joy, there would be no one to experience pain.

We have said there is absolutely no way we can prove life continues beyond the grave, but we have also said there is absolutely no way we can prove it does not. We discussed the possibility of life having meaning without life after death. While we cannot be certain we are right, we explained why we believe that life has meaning only if there is a non-physical life after death.

If there was nothing really positive and good about life, the question of existence after death would be an academic one. Yet that seems not to be the case. We have said love is the very best one human being can give another human being. We have said that love is the most positive of human experiences. It is the deepest, most profound, of human relationships. It is the giving of all you have to give to someone else.

If it is possible that we continue to exist after death, then should we not live for the possibility that life and love will continue after death? Those who complete their search and understand love, know that if life does not end at death, love is worth living for in this life and the next. It seems intuitively clear that since you may continue to exist after death, you should live with the hope that love has meaning and is worth living for in this life, and with the hope that after physical death you will live forever in a world filled with never ending love.

What connection then does life on earth have with life after death? What does love on earth have to do with life after death? What can we say about the nature of life after death? We have once again returned to that murky area where intellect, insight, and intuition blend with belief and faith.

We simply cannot know what life after death may or may not be like. Yet, as we have already noted, the "feeling" persists that life beyond the grave should possess the positive aspects of life in this world. If the most positive aspect of life is love, then a life after death that is filled with love seems to be worth believing in. If we continue to exist after death, we may indeed find ourselves in a "world" where people love people.

If love is worth living for, and if the only realistic alternative is nihilistic death, then it seems that you, and I, and everyone else, should love each other and live for the possibility that we will continue to exist after death in an existence filled with love. Yet choosing love because the alternative is a meaningless death is not a good enough reason. Love must be chosen by those who in their heart, mind, and soul truly want to love, or their choice will be a shallow one that will not last. Those who choose to love must do so because they want to love.

We have said that if you have completed your search of your heart, mind, and soul, you know and understand love, and you know you can and should love people. We have said that since your existence may not end at death, you should live for the possibility you will continue to exist after your physical death, and in anticipation of continued existence you should do the best you can while you are alive, you should love people. We noted that since it is always your choice to love or not, you should always choose love. We have said that life after death may offer eternal love for those who choose to love each other while on earth. We have said that since each of us must die sooner or later, it is totally right to love on earth and enter a forever of never-ending love, even if choosing love brings immediate physical death, and it is totally wrong not to love, even if not loving prolongs earthly life and pleasures.

Can we accept a random existence after death that has no guidance, might there be more? If we are to accept that human beings may continue to exist after the death of their bodies we need to consider what, if any, external force or presence may "guide" or "control" such existence. We are way past the limits of human comprehension, at the point where belief must turn into faith. The more modern science has discovered, the more it seems that some form of "logical", "rational", process occurs in nature, replacing random events with "planned" sequences far too complex to be explained by the interaction of mechanistic forces. Such "logical" progression of nature may be the result of some incredible computer like property whereby nature is equipped with some sort of "artificial intelligence", perhaps so, perhaps not. Yet we have already concluded that the odds that such an "artificial intelligence" might be created at random appear to be as close to zero as can possibly be imagined. Perhaps the universe is not "controlled" or "guided" by some deterministic process. Perhaps the universe is "controlled" or "guided" by someone. [Please read the next Note in its entirety before reaching conclusions about what it says.]

GOD

Throughout human history there has existed in the majority of people a belief in some power, existence, a logical presence beyond human existence, a God (or gods). During at least the past few thousand years there has appeared in many cultures a belief in a God who is good, a God who wants human beings to do that which is good. Those who have completed their search of their heart, mind, and soul, know and understand love. Those who have completed their search know and understand in their heart, mind, and soul that it is good for people to love each other.

Many believe that a God exists who gave us the love that is in our heart, mind, and souls. Many believe that a God exists who wants people to do that which is good, to love each other.

This belief in a God who wants people to love each other has its roots in intuitive feelings of humankind, in messages of prophets, and for those who believe in Jesus, in the word of God. There will always be arguments that the messages are messages made up by the messengers, yet from all that we have discussed, from all that those who have completed their search know and understand about love, it seems that if God does exist the message from him would be for us to love one another, precisely what we are told it is.

There is, I believe, in most of us a feeling that perhaps God does exist. That feeling may be insight, or it may be the result of a collective deep seeded desperation in human beings to be more than doomed animals. We will not know until our death, the definitive answer forever prohibited us by the limits imposed by our being no more than a part of that which we seek to explore. We are forbidden the ultimate knowledge, leaving us forever poised at the point where faith must take over if we are to believe in the existence of God.

Perhaps the "logical" selections that appear to take place in nature cannot be explained by physical processes, but rather represent actions taken by some indescribable presence, God, perhaps not. If our intuitive feelings and the calculations that support them are correct, then the complex low entropy universe in which we live cannot be the result of random chance, a universe which we are told by science literally exploded out of the head of a pin, a universe that supports complex living organisms which exhibit remarkable levels of consciousness.

Furthermore, we are confronted with the ultimate "Why?" There is no objective way to logically deduce why the laws that govern the universe are as they are, why matter and energy exist at all, why there is more than nothing? Those who truly understand the question why know that the very first matter and energy to appear in the universe cannot be the source of the creation of that matter and energy. Nor does it do any good to say that matter and energy were not created and have always existed, for that begs the question why do they exist, and invites the question why would probability be rendered meaningless by the formation of a low entropy universe out of that matter and energy?

Self-assembling systems form organized structures out of pre-existing disordered components, those who believe that the universe self-assembled cannot get past the ultimate question why pre-existing components were created and existed in the first place, and for that matter the question how an infinitesimally small phase space was selected to achieve low entropy. If we are honest with ourselves, the only possible answer we can construct from objective observations based on current scientific knowledge as to why the low entropy universe in which we live exists, is that it was designed and created to be as it is. If a Creator does not exist then the logical conclusion is that the low entropy universe in which we live would not exist, and we could not exist.

It seems to me, no matter what their predisposition's are toward the existence of God, future generations of scientists will find themselves faced with the necessity of postulating an intelligence which somehow directs natural events. Of course, scientific theories would not prove nor disprove the existence of God, for if God exists it appears that he has not chosen to reveal

that fact in an objective, scientifically observable, manner. We simply cannot scientifically prove God does or does not exist. We may "believe" that God exists, yet rather than belief, is the existence of God something we should have "faith in"?

As we have said, having faith something is true is far more than believing it is true. Faith comes from your heart, mind, and soul, it is beyond adequate definition. We can say that those who have faith accept as true what they choose to believe is true, at least until proven beyond doubt to be untrue. Yet if you realize what it means to say that nothing can be totally proved or disproved, then what you choose to have faith in is in fact what you choose to accept as true for the rest of your life. What you have faith in is not simply what you believe to be true, but rather what you choose to believe is true because in your heart, mind, and soul, you want it to be true. You decide what you will have faith in, what you want to be true if anything at all is true. Having faith that something is true does not make it true, if it is not true, it is not true. Yet if what you have faith in is in fact true, it is true, period.

Why should you have faith God exists? If the message about God had been that he wanted wars or sacrifices or other manner of destruction, then there would be little reason to have faith in him. But the message was and is that God wants every human being to do that which is good. The message was and is that God wants every human being to love every other human being.

In our heart, mind, and soul we know and understand love. In our heart, mind, and soul we know and understand that it is "good" for each of us to love each other. If you have not completed your search of your heart, mind, and soul, if you do not yet understand that it is good to love each other, if you do not yet understand that we can and should do that which is good, then you will find it very difficult to find a reason to have faith in the existence of God. But if you have searched your heart, mind, soul, your very being, and know and understand love, you should find it worth having faith that a God exists who wants all people to do that which is good, a God who wants all people to love each other. For if God exists he exists, period.

What is God like if he exists? In your heart, mind, and soul you know and understand that if God exists, God is good. Why do we say that if God exists, God is good? In your heart, mind, and soul, you know and understand that if a presence greater than all else in this universe, a Supreme Being, God, exists, God is good. In your heart, mind, and soul, you know and understand that the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul is good. In your heart, mind, and soul, you know and understand that if a Supreme Being, God exists, then it is that Supreme Being, God, who has given you the love that is in your heart, mind, and soul.

If you do not want evil to have power over good, if you do not want evil to fill the world instead of good, I cannot imagine why you would not choose to have absolute faith that if the presence greater than all else in this universe, the Supreme Being, God, exists, God is good. Whether you believe that God exists or does not exist, if you do not want to reject good and embrace evil, if you are not against good, you should have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good. There is absolutely no reason not to have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good. I have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good. You can and should have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good.

Saying that if God exists, God is good, does not "prove" that God exists, it does not even say that God exists. It says that if God exists, God is good, period. It says that if God exists, God is good, and that he wants each and every person to do that which is good. Even if you do not believe that God exists, or you are not sure what the "good" is that God would have us do in this world, in your heart, mind, and soul you know and understand that if God exists, God is good.

In our heart, mind, and soul, each of us knows and understands that if God exists, God is good. In our heart, mind, and soul, each of us knows and understands that if God exists, God wants every human being to do that which is good. The question is not "If God exists what would God have us do?", for in our heart, mind, and soul we know and understand that God would have us do that which is good. The question is, if God exists "What is the good that God would have us do?"

I have almost absolute faith that every human being who has completed their search of their heart, mind, and soul, knows and understands the love that is in their heart, mind, and soul. I have almost absolute faith that every human being who knows and understands the love that is in their heart, mind, and soul, knows and understands that it is good for each and every human being to love each and every other human being. I have almost absolute faith that every human being who has completed their search of their heart, mind, and soul, and who knows and understands the love that is in their heart, mind, and soul, knows and understands that if God exists God would have each and every human being love each and every other human being.

When I say I have absolute faith, I am saying that what I have absolute faith in is absolutely true, period. Why, instead of saying that I have absolute faith, do I say that I have "almost absolute" faith that God would have each and every human being love each and every other human being? It is because I recognize that I am not good. I am a small part of the whole, and I cannot know anything with absolute certainty unless the whole has revealed it to me in a manner that no one could question. I do not believe that I should have absolute faith in anything except that if God exists, God is good, and absolute faith in all that follows from that absolute truth. I may be wrong, perhaps God has already revealed to us that he exists and that we can and should love each and every human being. Yet I am not certain that God has revealed this truth to us.

When I say that God would have us love each and every human being, I am making a statement that goes beyond saying that if we do that which God would have us do we will do that which is good. Even though I have almost absolute faith that God would always have each and every human being love each and every other human being, I cannot say that I have absolute faith that this is true. I cannot be "absolutely" certain that I am right. If we lived in a world where every human being chose to do God's will, it seems clear that each and every human being would love each and every other human being. Yet it appears that the world we live in will continue to be a world where many people choose not to love as God would have them love, and where some people choose to totally reject God.

There are many people in this world who choose to do physical harm to other people. I have almost absolute faith that God would always have us love our "neighbor" even if they are our enemy and would do physical harm to us, yet I am not absolutely certain that I am right. Perhaps there are times when God would have us do physical harm to a neighbor to prevent them from

doing physical harm to another neighbor? Furthermore, I am not absolutely certain how God would have us treat those who totally reject him, perhaps they are not our "neighbors", perhaps God would not have us love them (we discuss this possibility later)?

With the understanding that our "neighbors" may not include those who have totally rejected God, I have "almost absolute faith", not "absolute faith", that if God exists, God would have us love each and every one of our neighbors each and every moment of our lives. I have "almost absolute" faith that God would always have us love our neighbor, however, since I am not good, I do not have "absolute" faith that this is true.

After you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand the love that God has given us, perhaps you may believe that I am wrong about what the good is that God would have us do. I have absolute faith that if God exists, God would have each and every one of us do that which is good. To find the answer to the question what is the good that God would have us do, you must use the knowledge and understanding of what God would have you do that you find in your heart, mind, and soul. Whatever the answer you find is, you must be absolutely certain that it is based on the true, pure, real, love that, if God exists, God has given you in your heart, mind, and soul.

Some people who believe that God does not exist, believe that human beings can do good even in a universe where there is no God. Is it possible that they are right? If human beings want to do good, can they do good if God does not exist?

We have concluded that it appears that no rational theory provides us with a singular physical consciousness which continues to exist after physical death, so that a single physical "me" continues to exist after my death in my physical "past". We said that if we do not have a singular physical or non-physical consciousness that continues to exist after physical death, then those who believe in nihilism are probably correct, and some type of "nihilistic" void awaits all of us. It may be a true void, like the void that preceded our birth, or it may be a very strange void where billions of "me" merely co-exist. Whatever physical form it might take, it would seem to satisfy the definition of a "meaningless" void.

After many years of thought I reached the conclusion that if we do not survive the grave, then the most logical deduction is that after our physical death we have no meaningful past, present, or future. I may be wrong, but I think I am right (if you don't fully understand what we are saying please reread the note "Who Will You Be When You No Longer Are?"). If there is no life after physical death, then it seems clear to me that on our physical death our life is in fact consumed by "nothing", and our life is meaningless. If there is no life after death, neither life nor love nor good nor bad have any real meaning for human beings.

If physical death annihilates our physical past, present, and future, then our life has meaning and purpose and value only if after our physical death our consciousness continues to exist in a non-physical life. We cannot prove that we continue, or do not continue, to exist after our physical death. Indeed there may be no life after death, and your life may have no meaning and value. Yet if there is a life after death, then you will continue to experience a non-physical existence after your physical death, and your life does in fact have meaning and value.

If God exists, God is good. If God exists, perhaps God gives each of us a non-physical life after death, so that our life both before and after physical death has meaning and value. If God in some manner beyond human comprehension grants existence to human beings, even after the death of their bodies, then and only then life becomes more than a brief, isolated event. Then, and only then, life and love have meaning and purpose, we can do that which is good, and life is worth living.

Is it possible that even if God does not exist, there may be a non-physical life after death that gives meaning and value to our life? The intuitive answer seems to be no. I cannot imagine a human spirit that survives death if there is no presence beyond life other than human spirits, if there is no Spirit greater than the human soul. I do not believe that the only non-physical presence in the universe can be the human soul. I intuitively believe that if there is no Spirit greater than the human spirit, then there is no human soul, and we do in fact cease to exist on our death.

If there is no non-physical Spirit greater than the human soul, if there is no God, it makes no sense to conclude that a physical being born into our physical world has at birth, or somehow develops, a non-physical soul. I can see no possible way that a physical human being, who is a tiny part of an unimaginably huge universe, can survive physical death if there is no Spirit, no God, to grant that "physical being", in some manner and fashion beyond our understanding, a non-physical soul and life. It somehow seems intuitively true that without God there would be no reason to believe that we possess a "consciousness" that continues to exist beyond the death of our bodies, no reason to have hope that after our death we may live forever in a non-physical world. Even though it cannot be proven, it seems intuitively clear that if God does not exist then there is no life after death.

Similarly, it seems intuitively clear that if God does not exist there is no "heaven", no life after death that is good. It is intuitively impossible for me to imagine the existence of a life after death in a heaven where there is no Spirit greater than the human soul, where God is not present. I cannot imagine a heaven filled with perfect love that is "created" or "sustained" by imperfect human souls, who during their physical lives repeatedly fail to choose love. It would seem that only God, the One who is good, the One who is perfect, the One who loves with perfect love, could forgive human sins so that heaven would be filled with love. I cannot imagine a heaven filled with real, true, pure, love without the presence in heaven of One who loves with perfect love, without the presence of One who is good. Without the presence of God who loves with perfect love, I cannot envision a heaven where human beings share real, true, pure, love. I cannot "prove" anything to be true, yet it seems intuitively clear that if God does not exist, there is no heaven.

I simply do not believe that there is a life after death in a heaven filled with love if God, the One who is good, the One who is perfect, the One who loves with perfect love, does not exist. It would seem that without God each of us ceases to exist on the day of our death, annihilating our past, present, and future. It somehow seems intuitively true that without God, good and love and life are empty ideas that live and die with each human being.

If you are not yet willing to have faith in the existence of God, is nihilism necessarily what you must accept as being true? We concluded that if there is no non-physical life after death, then it appears that physical death consumes our physical past, present, and future. Yet we also concluded that there is no reason to reject the possibility that each of us has some kind of permanent physical or non-physical consciousness. There is absolutely no logical reason whatsoever to reject the possibility that nihilism may be false! There is no reason whatsoever not to search for an alternative to nihilism, to explore the possibility of a permanent physical or non-physical consciousness, to search for a reason for living. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever not to live for the possibility, however remote you may believe it to be, that life has meaning and value.

Perhaps God has "revealed" to all or some of us that he exists. Yet even if God has not "revealed" this to you, he has given you the choice to have faith or not to have faith that he exists. Why should you have faith that God exists? We have said that we should have absolute faith that if God exists God is good, and we should have absolute faith that God would have us do that which is good. Should we have faith that God exists because if God exists, God is good? I believe the answer to that question is that if we want to do good, we should have faith that God exists. If we want good to exist and have meaning, if we want to do that which is good, we should have faith that the Supreme Being, God, exists.

Should we love God because if God exists, God is good? If we want to do that which is good, the answer is yes. We have concluded that if God does not exist, good and love and life are meaningless and have no value. If love among people is good and meaningful and has purpose, it is good and meaningful and has purpose only if God exists and only because of God. It should be clear to all who want to do that which is good that they should have faith that God exists, and that they should love God, the One who is good. It should be clear to all who believe that loving people is good, and who want to love their neighbor, that they should have faith in God, and love God, the One who is good, the One alone who gives meaning and purpose and value to love and to life.

If God makes it good for us to love each other in this life and in a world after death, and thus makes life worth living, then his existence alone gives us hope. It is right to have faith in God and to love God, the One who is good. It is right to have faith in God and to love God, for without him love would be no more than one of many emotions that die with those who embrace them. Without God each of us would cease to exist, making all the love we gave and received during our lifetimes empty and totally useless. Without God love would be destroyed by physical death and life would have absolutely no meaning or purpose. Without God, good and life and love have no meaning, or purpose, or value. Without God there would be no reason for living.

When you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, you will know and understand that you should have faith in God and love God because God is good. When you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, you will know and understand love, and you will know and understand that you should have faith in God and love God because God gives meaning and purpose to love and to life. You will know and understand that the existence of God gives meaning and value to a "good" life on earth, and gives us hope for a "good" life after death. You

should love God for making life worth living by giving us love in this world, and by giving us hope for a world after death that is filled with love.

If God exists, God is good. You should love God with the greatest love you can give. I have absolute faith that if you love God you should love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength. You should love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength, for God alone makes it meaningful and right and good for us to love him and to love each other. You should love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength, for God alone gives us hope that if we love him and love each other we will live forever in a joyous communion of love. If you love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength, you have chosen to do that which you can do, you can do no more, you should do no less. If you love God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength, you will do what God wants you to do, you will love your neighbor as yourself.

Even though many believe that God has already spoken to us, and that we have not listened, why does God not speak directly to each and every one of us and tell us that he exists? Perhaps God has not revealed to us that he exists in a manner that no one could question, and has instead caused the observable physical universe to appear to follow deterministic laws, because he does not want us to know with absolute certainty that he does exist. Perhaps if we knew for an absolute fact that God exists, we would not choose to do God's will because we choose to love God and our neighbors, rather we would choose to do God's will to avoid punishment. Perhaps God has not revealed to us that he exists so that we may have the free will choice to have faith that God exists, and the free will choice to love God and our neighbors, or not.

Why does God give us a choice to love or not to love? Why would God not create all of us in such a way that we must love as God would have us love? Why not require all people to do to others what they would have others do to them? Perhaps the answer is that if evil did not exist, then not only would human beings not have a choice to do that which is bad, they would not have a choice to do that which is good. Perhaps if during our life on earth we could not do that which is evil, if at some point in our physical existence we did not have the free will choice to do that which is good or not, we simply could not do that which is good. Perhaps to do good during our physical lives, we must have the choice to do that which is good or do that which is evil, because it is our choice that determines whether we do good or evil. Perhaps if we are to do that which is good, before we act we must choose to do good instead of evil.

We have completed a full circle back to the question, what is the meaning and purpose of life, yet it has become the question, should we believe God exists and have faith in him and love him? We have suggested that the reason we should have faith in and love God is because if God exists, God is good, he wants us to love him and to love each other, and he gives meaning and purpose to life and love. A "why not" argument can be made that if God does not exist nihilists are probably right and death is the end, but since God might exist we should do what he would want us to do or we might end up tortured in some form of eternal punishment. That play it safe logic sounds good in theory, yet it leaves us with a feeling that those who love to avoid punishment don't really love at all. If we are to have faith in God, and love as he would have us love, we must choose to love him because we want to love as he would have us love, not because we want to avoid the consequences of not loving.

After you have searched your heart, mind, and soul and know and understand love, you must choose whether or not to believe that there is nothing in the world better than people loving other people. If you truly know and understand love I believe you will agree if anything in life is worth living for, love is worth living for. If you agree love is worth living for, and if love has meaning only if God exists, then you must choose whether or not to live for the one hope for human beings, that God exists. You should not have faith in God because you want to avoid eternal punishment. You should have faith in God and love God, because God is good. You should have faith in God and love God because you want to do that which is good, you want to love God and your neighbor.

If we love as God would have us love, what will happen to us after our physical death? Think about the real, true, pure, love you found when you searched your heart, mind, and soul, and you will know and understand what love in heaven would be like. I have absolute faith that if God exists, and if there is a heaven, then if we choose to do God's will, we will live forever in heaven in the presence of God, the One alone who is good. After one moment in heaven, we will know that every single moment of our existence, for the rest of eternity, will be filled with the joy of real, true, pure love. We will know that our entire being will be totally filled with real, true, pure love, forever. All the illness, pain, and sorrow we experienced during our life on earth will vanish completely. In an instant, memories of even the worst tortures that happened to us before our death will be overwhelmed by the love that surrounds us, and will "disappear" forever. We will exist in the presence of real, true, pure, perfect love, forever. We will exist in the presence of God.

If the existence of God is your one hope for an eternal life of love, and if you believe love is good, and if you want to love your neighbor, you will choose to have faith in God and to love God, the One who is good. If you want to love your neighbor, you will choose to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, for without God your desire to love any person is an empty dream that ends at the grave. If you love God you will do what he wants you to do, you will love your neighbor as God would have you love, you will love your neighbor as yourself. To love God and your neighbor is right and good, it gives meaning and purpose to life, it makes life worth living.

Answers to the many questions life poses may now be found by those who truly know and understand love. Yet knowing the answers does not mean you will choose love. If you believe love is good, you must decide whether or not you want to love. The alternatives to faith in God and to love are tempting. Many, if not most, people will choose them.

Just as it is your choice to love people or not to love people, it is your choice to love God or not to love God. The choice is yours, and yours alone. I can only hope you choose, every single moment of your lives, to have faith in God and to love as he would have you love. I truly believe if you know and understand love and want to do good, you will choose to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and you will choose to love your neighbor as yourself. This is the complete answer to all questions.

I have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good. I have absolute faith that if God exists, God is perfect. I have absolute faith that if God exists, it is God's will that each and every one of us do that which is good. If God exists, it is God's will that each and every one of us be perfect. If you do God's will, you will love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and you will love your neighbor as yourself.

What about traditional religious beliefs, Christian theology and doctrine, baptism, sainthood, communion, all the beliefs and observances generations have cherished. What role do they play in our discussion of love? We have said love is a basic, profound part of each and every person's being. We have stated that if you are willing to know and understand love you will know and understand it. We have said that love is good and life has meaning only if God exists. We have said that if God exists he wants you to love him and love your neighbor. We have said that if you want to do good you will choose to have faith in God and love as he would have you love. If you do so you will be doing the best you can do, you will be loving now and living with hope for a joyful eternal life.

So what does this say to us about baptism, positions on church doctrines, participation in organized religion, beliefs about the nature of Jesus, etc? Must we address each of these questions before loving God and our neighbor? If you understand love, the answer is clear that if you choose to love God and your neighbor, you will do the best you can do. You will do the best you can do to do that which you should do. That is all you can do. If you choose to love God, you will decide what role organized religion, and church doctrines and philosophies, will play in your life. If you choose to love God and your neighbor, every decision you make will be determined by that love. If you choose to love God and your neighbor, all you do will be governed and controlled by love.

If you think about it for a few minutes, you should realize that if you love God and your neighbor you will in every instance do the best you can to do what is right. That is all you can do, that is all God requires. Certainly loving God means you will help your neighbors when they are in need of help. Perhaps you will decide that if you love God you must be baptized and observe communion, perhaps not. Perhaps you will decide loving God requires you to make many changes in your religious beliefs, perhaps not. When you choose to love God and your neighbor, every choice you make will be made out of love. It is the choice to love God as he would have you love him, and out of that love to love people as he would have you love them, that is the one important choice, all other choices will be governed by that one profound decision. To love God and our neighbor as God would have us love is the complete answer to all our questions.

Some two thousand years before the writing of these notes, a man named Jesus said to all who would listen that God gave these commandments to all people, including you, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

When asked who is my "neighbor", Jesus replied, "A man was on his way from Jerusalem down to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down by the same road; but when

he saw him, he went past on the other side. So too a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him he went past on the other side. But a Samaritan who was making the journey came upon him, and when he saw him he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, bathing them with oil and wine. Then he lifted him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him there. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper, and said, take care of him; and if you spend any more, I will repay you on my way back. Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The questioner answered, "the one who showed him kindness." Jesus said, "go and do likewise."

Who is your neighbor? With the possible exception of those who have totally rejected love (we discuss later the possibility that people who have committed the eternal sin are not our neighbors), every person who loves you, every person who hates you, every enemy, every stranger, people of every continent, people of every race, every single human being in the entire world, everyone, is your neighbor. Jesus said that all who "keep the commandments" will live forever, continuing to exist after physical death in a state of never-ending joy.

Who was, and/or is, Jesus? Many people differ in who they believe Jesus to be. Many believe Jesus is the Son of God. There are many, many different beliefs as to what it means to say Jesus is God's son. Some believe Jesus was God incarnate. Other people believe Jesus was a prophet, given knowledge by God of the nature and meaning of life. Still others believe Jesus was a wise man with great insight into human existence. Some do not understand, or have not completely agreed with, what Jesus said, and therefore have thought little about who he is or was. I cannot scientifically prove that any one of the answers given to questions about Jesus is the true answer, that one or more of the answers are partially true, or that none truly answer the questions.

Many people believe that Jesus and God are One, and that you must accept Jesus as God before you can know God and love God. In the Gospel of John we are told that Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. . ."; Luke says that Jesus said "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."; Matthew tells us that Jesus said "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven."; and John tells us Jesus said; "The Father and I are One."

I believe that even if you have not decided who you believe Jesus is, you can and should love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself, and that out of that love you will choose to believe, and have faith in, what your heart, mind, and soul leads you to believe or have faith about Jesus. If you do not believe or have faith that Jesus and God are One, and if Jesus and God are One, then if you can and do love God perhaps you are loving Jesus, and God will forgive you for not having believed and had faith that Jesus and God are One, perhaps not. Perhaps it is possible for you not to believe or have faith that Jesus and God are One and at the same time not to believe or have faith that Jesus and God are not One, and if Jesus and God are One, perhaps God will forgive you if you can and do love God, perhaps not (the last two sentences are complex, you may need to give them some additional thought). Perhaps, if Jesus and God are One, to love God you must first

have faith that Jesus and God are One, and you must love Jesus. As we have said before, since we cannot know anything with absolute certainty unless the whole has revealed it to us, the best we can do is have faith, or not, that Jesus and God are One (many have faith that God has already revealed to us that Jesus and God are One).

You must answer for yourself the question of who Jesus was, and is. You may choose to believe, and have faith in, what your heart, mind, and soul leads you to believe about Jesus. Perhaps it is beyond human ability to comprehend his true nature, perhaps not. Whoever you have faith or believe Jesus to have been, and to be, his message about life remains the same. The message of Jesus is that God exists; each of us continues to exist after the death of our bodies; God commands you to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" and to "love your neighbor as yourself"; it is right and good to love God without limit, the One alone who is good and who gives meaning and purpose to life and love; it is right and good to love your neighbor as yourself; and all who do God's will shall, after their physical death, live a joyful life in heaven, forever.

Jesus said that "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets", "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.", "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.", "There is no other commandment greater than these.", "... do this, and you will live." There is nothing else that we can and should do. It is your choice to love as God commands or not, period.

When you complete your search and know and understand the love that God has given you, you know and understand that you can and should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and that you can and should love your neighbor "as yourself". When you complete your search it will be clear to you what God means when he tells you that you can and should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

When you complete your search it will also be clear to you what God means when he tells you that you can and should love your neighbor "as yourself". To say that you can and should love your neighbor "as yourself", is not the same as saying that you can and should love your neighbor "as you love yourself". To say that you should love your neighbor "as yourself", does not mean that you should "love yourself". If you love your neighbor "as yourself", and both you and your neighbor are thirsty, you will not drink the only cup of water that you have because you "love yourself". Rather, you will give the cup of water to your neighbor because you love your neighbor "as yourself".

When you complete your search and know and understand the love that God has given you, you will know and understand that you can and should love your neighbor "as yourself", as if he or she was in your place, as if he or she was "you". You will know and understand that you should give your neighbor the food that you would give yourself, the water that you would give yourself, the shelter that you would provide for yourself, the clothing that you would wear, etc. You should care for your neighbor when they are sick as you would care for yourself. You should do to your neighbor what you would have them do to you. You should give your neighbor the food, water, shelter, clothing, etc., that you would have them give to you. You should care for

them when they are sick as you would have them care for you if you were sick; you should visit them when they are in prison as you would have them visit you if you were in prison; etc. You should give your neighbor real, true, pure, love. You should give your neighbor the love that God has given us. You should love your neighbor "as yourself".

Some may be uncomfortable with lack of references to particular Biblical passages. In my writings I rely only on the message that Jesus gave to us. I have faith that no matter who Jesus was or is, the message of Jesus is a message from God. I have no opinion on words not spoken by Jesus. What I sincerely believe is that, if we search our very being to understand love, each of us can love God and our neighbors, without discussing Old Testament writings and New Testament prophecies. I strongly believe loving God and our neighbors as God would have us love is all that God would have us do.

I do not particularly care what happened in Old Testament times, what descriptions of heaven are like, or what the future may bring. I have faith that I can and should "love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, with all my strength" and "love my neighbor as myself". I have faith that if I choose to love as God would have me love, I will make the best choices I am capable of making. I have faith that if each moment of each day I love as God would have me love, when I die I will have done all I could do, all I should do, and I will live forever in a heaven filled with joyful love. To love God and your neighbors each and every day as God would have you love is all that you should do.

I have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good. I have absolute faith that if God exists, God does that which is good. I have absolute faith that if God exists, God would have us do that which is good. I have absolute faith that if God exists, and if there is a heaven, then if we do God's will, after our death we will live forever in a heaven filled with joy. Even if I am wrong about what it is that we should do if we choose to do God's will, I have absolute faith that if God exists, we should do God's will. If you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, you will know and understand what God would have you do. You must be absolutely certain that you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand the love that God has given us. You must be absolutely certain that you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand and do God's will.

We have talked about existence after death, love, and God, and now we have come to a point where you will make choices and decisions about what you have read, for even if you do nothing you have made your choice. I believe all we have discussed is so deeply a part of human existence that you must search your heart, mind, and soul to know and understand what we have been talking about. I believe that you must search your heart, mind, and soul to know and understand love. I believe that if you complete your search, you will find in your heart, mind, and soul, the love God has given us, you will find the reason for living. You must be absolutely certain that you have completed your search, and that each of your answers is based on the knowledge and understanding of the love that God has given you that is in your heart, mind, and soul. If you choose to love as God would have you love, you will accept the most difficult of answers, and you will find peace and hope in your choices and decisions.

I have almost absolute faith that when you have completed your search of your heart and mind and soul, you will know and understand that you can and should "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself". When you search the very depth of your heart and mind and soul, you will know and understand that, even though many may not choose to love, each and every person has the choice to love, or not to love, as God would have them love. When you have completed your search you will know and understand that each and every one of us can and should choose to love as God would have us love.

You will know and understand that it is your choice, now and for every moment of the rest of your life on earth, to believe and have faith in God and to love as he would have you love, or not. You will know and understand that if there is a heaven, if you love as God would have you love, you will live a life worth living on this earth, and after your physical death you will live an endless, joyful, life in heaven in the presence of God, the One who is good.

After many, many years of thought and discussion, I believe that there are many difficult questions which have answers that are unclear, uncertain, or unknown; that there are many thoughts and ideas that language cannot adequately express; that there is knowledge beyond human ability to know; that we cannot "prove" anything unless truth is revealed to us; etc. After completing my search of my heart, my mind, and my soul, I believe that we do not need to answer all the difficult questions, express in words all that we intuitively feel, know what we cannot know, "prove" what is beyond human ability to prove, etc.

I have absolute faith that if God exists, God is good.

I have absolute faith that if God exists, God would have us do that which is good.

I have absolute faith that if God exists, and if there is a heaven, if we choose to do that which God would have us do, after our death we will live forever in heaven in the presence of God, the One who is good.

I have almost absolute faith that if you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, your very being, you will know and understand the love that God has given us, and you will know and understand that you can and should "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself", nothing more, nothing less, period.

You will make your choice.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

A Lesser Love

There is no question that you can choose to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. There is also no question that

you should choose to love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. What if you choose to love God with less than all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and to love your neighbor less than yourself?

You can and should love as God would have you love. I believe that if you are unwilling to love God and your neighbors as God commands, you can choose to love God with a lesser love, you can choose to love God with as much of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength as you are willing to love him with, and you can choose to love your neighbors with a lesser love, you can choose to love your neighbor as much as yourself as you are willing to love them. Perhaps God will forgive you for not having loved as he would have you love if you choose to love him and your neighbors.

What does it mean to love God and your neighbors? Will God forgive everyone who loves God and their neighbors? Will God forgive us if we choose to love him and our neighbors with the "least" love we can give? Will God forgive us if we love him and our neighbors with "more" love than the "least" love we can give, yet choose not to love as God would have us love? Will God forgive us only if we choose to do what we can and should do, only if we choose to love as God would have us love?

I intuitively believe that God will forgive only those who love God and their neighbors. At the same time, I do not believe that it is possible for us to identify those who will be forgiven for specific choices to do less than God would have them do, and those who will not be forgiven. If we are not willing to love as God would have us love, I believe that God alone will judge who, if anyone, will be forgiven for choosing to love him and their neighbors with a "lesser" love.

What should you choose to do if you are not willing to love as God would have you love and you are faced with the choice to love God and your neighbors with the "least" love or with "more" than the "least" love you can give? When you make the choice to love God and your neighbors with "less" love or with "more" love, choose to love God and your neighbors with the "most" love you are willing to love them with. For example, I have faith that if out of love for your hungry neighbors you may choose to give food to 100 or 50 or 20 of them, you can and should choose to love as God would have you love, you should give food to the 100. If you choose not to do what you can and should do, if you choose not to love as God would have you love, then do not give food to 20 neighbors, give food to 50 neighbors.

I strongly believe that if I know and understand that I can and should love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, and love my neighbor as myself, then I know and understand what it means to love God and my neighbor as God would have me love, and I know and understand what it means to love God and my neighbor with a lesser love.

It may be that God will forgive you only if you love him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. If that is true, what I have said about choosing a lesser love is wrong, and choosing either a lesser love or no love will lead you to eternal, loveless, punishment. Yet one of my strongest beliefs is that God

will forgive many, most, or all, of those of you who love God and who love your neighbors, even if you do not love him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and do not love your neighbor as yourself.

If you are not willing to love God and your neighbors as God commands, love God with as much of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength as you are willing to love him with, and love your neighbor as much as yourself as you are willing to love them, with the hope that God may forgive you.

A Fanatic Life or a Normal Life

What will our life be like if we love God and our neighbors as God would have us love? What will our life be like if we love God and our neighbors with a "lesser love"? These are very, very, difficult questions. It is intuitively true that if we love God and our neighbors we will give food to a starving child, water to a thirsty stranger, shelter to someone who is homeless and cold. This intuitive truth is strong and basic. Is it always good to give a drink of water to a thirsty neighbor? There may be situations where we must choose to give water to one of two neighbors who are literally dying of thirst, based on our evaluation of which neighbor must have the water immediately to live and which one can survive without water at that moment. There may be times when we are physically prevented from giving water to a thirsty neighbor, or when there may be other negative consequences of doing so. Yet it is intuitively clear that the basic, fundamental, statement "we should give water to a thirsty neighbor" is always true.

So where does all that we have said leave us? Does it leave us with pragmatic, situation ethics, where that which is "good" is determined by individual circumstances? It does not. There is a single answer for all situations, that answer is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself". As we have said, whether or not that which we do is good or bad, right or wrong, is determined by whether or not we love God and our neighbor as God would have us love.

Perhaps God will forgive us if we love God and our neighbor with a lesser love, yet that does not change the fact that you can and should "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself", nothing more, nothing less, period. There is no question that if because I love God and my neighbor as God would have me love I give my neighbor something to eat or drink, then I have done that which I can and should do, I have done that which is good.

If I love a neighbor who is hungry and thirsty what will I do? The answer is that I will give them food and water. No matter how hard I have tried to find another answer, if I love my neighbor and my neighbor is hungry and thirsty, I cannot imagine not giving them food and water. If you know and understand the love that God has given us, you know and understand that there is no other answer. This alone tells me that if we love our neighbor as God would have us love, we will not live a "normal life", we will live a "fanatic life".

So what will we do if we live a "fanatic life"? If you love your neighbor as yourself, you will do what you can so that each and every one of your neighbors knows and understands that they can

and should choose to do that which is good, that they can and should choose to do God's will. We know that if God exists and there is a heaven, then if our neighbors choose to do God's will, our neighbors will live forever in heaven, there is nothing better. We know that if God exists and there is a hell, then if our neighbors do not choose to do God's will, they will live forever in hell, there is nothing worse. It seems clear that if I love my neighbors as God would have me love them, I will do all that I can so that each and every one of my neighbors will know and understand God's commandments, so that they may choose to do God's will and live forever in heaven. If you love your neighbor as yourself, how can you do anything less than the best you can so that each and every one of your neighbors knows and understands that they can choose to do God's will, and live a joyous life forever in heaven?

What can and should I do? It seems absolutely clear that if I do God's will, I will do my best to visit my neighbors and help them know and understand God's word so that they may choose to do God's will. It also seems absolutely clear that if I do God's will, I will give food to each of my neighbors if they are hungry, water if they are thirsty, shelter if they are homeless, etc. It seems absolutely clear that if I do God's will, I will care for my neighbor who is sick until they are well, visit my neighbor who is in prison, and comfort my neighbor who is lonely. I do not see how I can reach any other conclusion.

I strongly believe that this means that if I do God's will my life will be a truly "fanatic life". If I do God's will, then every moment of my life for the rest of my life I will do the best that I can to communicate God's word to my neighbors by word and by deed. If I do what I can and should do, I will go from neighbor to neighbor, conveying God's word to them and helping them if they need food, water, shelter, etc. I will stay with each neighbor only as long as is necessary to see to that neighbor's needs and to tell them about God's commandments. This is a very difficult life, yet I cannot imagine that I should do anything less. I simply do not believe that there is any other life that we can and should live.

Even though you may agree with what we have just said, you need to recognize that it is incredibly difficult to live a "fanatic life". It is relatively easy to accept that living a "normal life" filled with love for our family and friends is far better than living a life filled with selfish physical and emotional pleasure. It is not as easy to accept that a "normal life" is not the life that we should live, that it is not the "good life". It is extremely difficult to accept that we should live a life filled with "fanatic" and total acceptance of that which God would have us do.

This brings us to a troubling question, if you "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself", and you live in a world where some people do not choose to do God's will, will you ever do that which you would not do in a world where every person does God's will? If you love God as God would have you love, if you love your neighbor as yourself, will you ever do a specific act in this world that you would not do in a world where every person loved as God would have them love, where every person loved their neighbor as God would have them love? This is a very, very, difficult question.

God has given each and every one of us the choice of giving food to our hungry neighbor or not. God has given each and every one of us the choice of doing physical harm to our neighbor or

not. No matter what anyone else may choose to do, each of us has the choice to give food to a hungry neighbor or not, and each of us has the choice to do physical harm to a neighbor or not. I strongly believe that God would never have a neighbor choose not to give food to a hungry neighbor. I strongly believe that God would never have a neighbor choose to do physical harm to another neighbor. I simply do not believe that it is ever God's will that any of us choose not to give food to our hungry neighbor, or that any of us choose to do physical harm to our neighbor.

If your neighbor has plenty to eat yet is thirsty, and your neighbor refuses to share their food, it is not God's will that you say to your neighbor "give food to your hungry neighbor and then I will give water to you", it is God's will that you love your neighbor as yourself and give them a drink of water if they are thirsty. If your neighbor is doing physical harm to their neighbor, and your neighbor is homeless, hungry, and thirsty, it is not God's will that you say to your neighbor "do not do physical harm to your neighbor and then I will give food, water, and shelter to you", it is God's will that you love your neighbor as yourself and give them food, water, and shelter. If your neighbor is doing physical harm to their neighbor, it is not God's will that you say to your neighbor "do not do physical harm to your neighbor and then I will not do physical harm to you", it is God's will that you love your neighbor as yourself and not do physical harm to them.

If we can kill one neighbor and prevent them from killing two other neighbors, it is not God's will that two people be killed, it is not God's will that one person be killed. It is God's will that the person who would kill repent and that no one be killed. It is not God's will that two people be killed, it is not God's will that one person be killed. It is God's will that we do that which is good, that no one be killed. If we do physical harm to reduce the physical harm done by another person, there is one more person in the world who is doing physical harm, not one less. It is only when the person who has chosen to do physical harm repents and chooses to do God's will, that there is one less person doing physical harm, and one more person in the world who is doing God's will. I am unwilling to conclude that God would have any of us do physical harm to our neighbor when each and every one of us has the choice to do physical harm or not to do physical harm, to kill or not to kill.

If after you finish reading these notes you do not agree with one or more of the conclusions we reach, you may want to read our comments and notes, which discuss some of our views on complex questions and difficult topics, and perhaps read our original book which contains some additional text.

It is not God's will that even one person for a single moment does anything less than God's will. It is God's will that each and every moment of our lives each and every one of us do God's will, nothing less, nothing more, period.

My hope is that if we live a "fanatic life", we will have done God's will on earth, and after our physical death we will live a joyous life in heaven, nothing could be better. If we do God's will we may suffer pain, or even death, at the hands of those who do not choose to do God's will. I strongly believe that God would have us live a "fanatic life", and that if we do, after our physical death the horrendous pain and suffering, all the horrors of our life, will be completely overwhelmed by the love and joy that is in heaven, and will "disappear" forever. I have absolute faith that, no matter what happens to us during our life on earth, if God exists and there is a

heaven, if we do God's will we will live a joyous life forever in the presence of God, the One alone who is good.

One of the greatest fears of all living creatures is fear of death. It is human nature to resist death as though somehow it can always be put off one more day. Instinct urges you to do whatever it takes to survive, but only those who have never really thought about death can deny the utter futility of resisting at all cost the inevitable. It is not death you should fear, but what may lie beyond. If you have done that which is most likely to lead to an eternal life of happiness if such eternal life exists, it makes no sense to do anything to destroy that possibility. If you have done that which is most likely to lead to an eternal life of happiness, you should not fear anything at all, but should be filled with hope and joy.

What if I am wrong about God wanting us to live a "fanatic life"? I understand that if I am wrong, the consequences of choosing to live a "fanatic life" may be devastating. I strongly believe that we can and should live a "fanatic life", yet I do not believe that during my lifetime on earth I will ever be able to say in good conscience that I am absolutely certain that I am right. I have noted that what I find in my heart, mind, and soul to be true may not be. Perhaps I have not completed my search, and I simply do not know, or will not admit, that I have not? Perhaps the hundreds of millions of people, including virtually every theologian and philosopher, who believe that we can and should love God and family and friends with a more complex love are right. Perhaps those who believe that we should use minimal physical force to prevent or minimize physical harm are correct. If so, perhaps the "normal life" that the majority considers to be a "good life" is the life that God would have us live.

Perhaps many people will choose to live a "normal life", believing that they are doing that which God would have them do. Perhaps many other people who understand that they can and should live a "fanatic life", but are unwilling to do so, will also choose to live a "normal life". I am not in any way saying that many, or most, or even all, who live a "normal life" will not be forgiven by God. Indeed, while I cannot be sure, I strongly believe that God will forgive many, most, perhaps all, people who choose to love God and their neighbors, yet choose not to love as God would have them love. I strongly believe that God will forgive most, perhaps all, of those who choose to live a "normal life".

Let us take a brief look at a "normal life" that most would consider, for a middle age man or woman, to be characteristic of a "good life", a life where each individual has:

1. Strong spiritual beliefs and faith:

Faith in God. Strong spiritual beliefs and faith that provide a foundation for daily living. Active membership and participation in a church, synagogue, or other place of worship.

2. A strong family unit:

Marriage to a spouse who has strong positive characteristics, few negative traits, and is both loving and supportive. A life long relationship filled with love between husband and wife. Living as "one flesh" with our spouse, never lusting after him or her, but rather loving our spouse and

out of that love welcoming the physical pleasure that accompanies sexual relations. Two children, a boy and a girl, who are healthy, bright, energetic, loving children. Parents and close relatives who are healthy, supportive, loving, individuals. Friends who are loving members of an "extended family".

3. Economic and personal security:

A well paying job that gives employees plenty of time at home and provides sufficient income for the family's comfort, including a pleasant, yet modest house in a pretty setting that has enough room for the family, a yard for the children to play in, and that is in good repair. Modest furniture, including a nice couch, soft chairs, pretty tables, comfortable beds, etc. A simple but nice television, vcr, stereo, stove, refrigerator, microwave, personal computer, etc. Two late model, medium size cars with safety and basic comfort options. Nutritious and tasty meals, including reasonably priced restaurant meals several times a month. Protection from criminal activity and threats from foreign governments, provided by government agencies using social programs, diplomacy, and the minimum police and military force necessary to prevent one person from doing physical harm to another person.

4. Recreation and sports:

Participation by the adults in a sport at least a few hours a week. Participation by the children in one or more sports. Two to four weeks of family vacations each year in pleasant, inexpensive locations. Hobbies such as electronics, photography, crafts, woodworking, cooking, etc., that cost little to participate in.

5. Lifestyle:

Several hours a day with our children, helping them with homework, games, sports, reading, learning, etc. Several hours a day with our spouse, talking, playing games, working around the house, etc. Several hours a week with other members of our family and extended family, enjoying games, sports, hobbies, etc. Several hours a week for volunteer work at hospitals, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, etc. Several hours a week for volunteer work with children and adults who are lonely and need companionship. Generous donations to international, national, and local charitable organizations. A pleasant, happy, positive attitude toward all our neighbors – including family, friends, and strangers. A pleasant, happy, positive outlook toward our “normal” daily lives.

This is a “normal life” that most people would call a "good life". It appears that thousands of years of human biologic development, modified by human communication and intellect, have led to the majority view that this is the life we should live. Indeed, most people believe that this is the life that God would have us live. It is a life that focuses primary love and attention on family and self, and secondary love and attention on friends, while at the same time providing what each individual considers to be their fair share of love, care, and help to those outside what is commonly known as an extended family.

The collective wisdom of generations of human beings who want to do that which is good, is that God would have us live a "normal life". The vast majority of people believe that we should do

the best that we can to maximize the positive physical aspects of our lives on earth, while minimizing the negative. Most view life after death as a separate existence from life on earth, where those people who lived a normal life on earth will live a joyous life in heaven. Human beings intuitively believe that they should do the best they can to make physical life on earth as “good” as it can be.

Is a "normal life" the life God would have us live, or not? I return to the question, if I love a neighbor who is hungry and thirsty what will I do? The answer is that I will give my neighbor food and water. My conclusion remains the same, I strongly believe that God would have us live a “fanatic life”. I strongly believe that if I am wrong and God would have us live a normal life, God will forgive those who live the “fanatic life” we have described. Yet I may be wrong. You must complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul and find the answers to these questions yourself.

Even though I strongly believe that each and every one of us can and should live a “fanatic life”, I intuitively believe that very, very, very, very few will choose to live such a life. Almost everyone who chooses to love God and their neighbor will choose to love God and their neighbor with a “lesser love” than God would have them choose. Almost everyone who chooses to love God and their neighbor will choose to marry and have a family, to have a successful career, to support government use of minimal physical force to minimize physical harm, etc. Almost everyone who chooses to love God and their neighbor will choose to live a life that maximizes the positive physical aspects of their life on earth, without causing what they consider to be unacceptable negative consequences for their neighbors.

I am sickened when I realize that if I live a fanatic life and do not use minimal physical force to prevent physical harm, then my neighbors who I love will almost certainly suffer torture and death. If we do nothing to physically stop them, there will almost certainly be people who inflict excruciating pain and almost unimaginable tortures on helpless infants and children. I strongly believe that we should live a “fanatic life”, and that if we do so we will not do physical harm to our neighbor, yet I tremble with fear that I may be wrong. It would seem that only those who have extraordinary faith in God, who strongly believe that they know and understand God’s will, and who have almost absolute faith that God would have them live a “fanatic life”, would be willing to accept the horrors that would probably accompany a fanatic life. I cannot imagine that, even among those who have extraordinary faith in God, there are many people who have a strong enough belief that they know and understand God’s will that they have almost absolute faith that God would have them live a “fanatic life”.

Among those who believe that God would have us live a “fanatic life” and who want to love God and their neighbors, only a very, very, very, very small number will choose to live a “fanatic life”. I strongly believe that almost all people who want to love God and their neighbors will choose to live a “normal life”, and that God will forgive most, or all of them. I may be wrong, nothing we have said alters my strong belief that we can and should live a “fanatic life”. Perhaps if we know and understand that God would have us live a “fanatic life”, God will not forgive us if we choose to live a “normal life”.

Yet one of my strongest beliefs is that among those who are unwilling to live a “fanatic life”, God will forgive most, or all, who choose to live a “normal life” like the “normal life” we described. A “normal life” where we love God and our neighbor with a lesser love that is less than the love that God would have us love him and our neighbors with, yet is more than the least love that we can love God and our neighbors with. A "normal life" where you love God with as much of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength as you are willing to love him with, and love your neighbor as much as yourself as you are willing to love them. A “normal life” that, perhaps, is a “good life” that God will forgive us for choosing.

If you are unwilling to live a “fanatic life”, if you want to live a “normal life” that may be a “good life”, communicate God’s word to your neighbors so that they may choose to love God and their neighbors.

If you love God and your neighbors, if you want to live a “normal life” that may be a “good life”, you may focus some of your love and attention on a spouse, children, and other members of your extended family. Yet if you love God and your neighbors you will not focus all of your love and attention on your family and your extended family. If you focus all of the love and attention you are willing to give to your neighbors on your spouse, children, and extended family, then you do not love all of your neighbors. I strongly believe that if we love God and our neighbors, we will love each and every neighbor, focusing love and attention on our spouse, children, and other members of our extended family, while at the same time giving to neighbors outside our extended family as much as we are willing of the love that God would have us give to them.

One of the most difficult requirements of a “fanatic life” is not to do physical harm to a neighbor to minimize the physical harm that they do. Almost everyone accepts and encourages self-defense and the defense of others. Almost no one is willing to live a “fanatic life” that would allow a parent to savagely beat an infant, or a sadist to torture another human being. Almost no one is willing to live a “fanatic life” that would allow a mass murderer to kill innocent children, or a brutal political leader to commit genocide. Almost every human being who wants to love God and their neighbor accepts physical violence that they believe will “minimize” physical harm.

If you are unwilling to live a “fanatic life”, and you want to live a “normal life” that might be a “good life”, then love your neighbor with a lesser love, supporting social programs and diplomacy that might prevent violence, accepting only the minimum police, military, and personal force necessary to prevent one human being from doing physical harm to another human being. Love your neighbor, do your best to communicate God’s word to your neighbors who would do physical harm to their neighbors, so that they may choose to repent and not do physical harm to them. Do your best to inflict the minimum physical harm necessary to minimize the physical harm that is done by both your neighbor and by you.

My intuitive feeling is that unless you have almost absolute faith that God would have us live a fanatic life, if you choose to live a “fanatic life” you will be unwilling to accept the physical consequences, and you will turn from that life. My intuitive feeling is that many, perhaps almost every one, of those of you who have almost absolute faith that God would have us live a fanatic

life, and who choose to live a “fanatic life”, will be unwilling to accept the physical consequences, and you will also turn from that life.

Unless you are willing to accept the probable physical consequences of living a fanatic life, as the consequences of choosing to live a “fanatic life” unfold you may witness horrific events, perhaps including the torture and death of adults, children, and infants, and you will be tormented by fear that you are wrong and that it is not God's will that we live a fanatic life.

If you do not have almost absolute faith that God would have us live a “fanatic life”, do not be paralyzed by fear, choose to live a “normal life” like the “normal life” we described, with the hope that God may forgive you.

If you do have almost absolute faith that God would have us live a “fanatic life”, yet you are not willing to accept the physical consequences of a “fanatic life”, choose to live a “normal life” like the “normal life” we described, with the hope that God may forgive you.

You must be absolutely certain that you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand the true, pure, real, love that God has given us. You must be absolutely certain that you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, and know and understand God's will, what God would have you do. You must decide for yourself what you will do. You will make your choice.

You cannot go back, even a single moment. The choices you make every day of your life can never be taken back. Every moment that you choose not to love is a moment when you could have chosen to love as God would have you love, or to love God and your neighbors with a lesser love or to love God and your neighbors with a lesser love and live a “normal life”.

If you are not willing to accept the physical consequences of living a “fanatic life”, live a “normal life” like the “normal life” we described. If you are unwilling to live a “fanatic life”, love God with as much of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength as you are willing to love him with, and love your neighbors as much as yourself as you are willing to love them, with the hope that God will forgive you.

An Unforgivable Act

A very real problem is how to treat those who may have totally rejected God. If we believe in God, then we must recognize that evil exists which is opposed to God. Some human beings appear to have rejected love and God, and to have chosen the pleasures of evil. Jesus tells us that even though all else will be forgiven, there will be no forgiveness in this world or the next for those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit (Matthew says Jesus said "blasphemy" against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, whoever "speaks a word against" the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven). Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit have not only chosen to do evil, they appear to have separated themselves from, and totally rejected, God, the One alone who is good. Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit, who blaspheme God, the One alone who is good, even once, will never be forgiven, they have committed the eternal sin. No matter what else you do you must never commit the eternal sin.

Those who think they may have already committed the eternal sin, may not have. Carefully searching heart, mind, and soul, may help people tormented by fear that they have blasphemed, spoken a word against, the Holy Spirit. If the reader is afraid they have done so, the very fact they are frightened by the thought of blaspheming God perhaps suggests they may not have done so. If you believe you may have committed the eternal sin, perhaps you have not. If you believe you may have committed the eternal sin, you should talk with those who love God. You should talk with those who know and understand and have chosen to do God's will, so that if you have not committed the eternal sin you may stop being afraid and may choose to do God's will. You should use the knowledge and understanding of love you find when you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul, to decide if you really believe you have committed the eternal sin, or not. If you have not committed the eternal sin, then if you choose to love as God would have you love God will forgive you for everything you have ever done, for every sin you have ever committed. (if you are distressed or depressed, or if you continue to think you may have committed the eternal sin, see the following note on distress and depression)

How do you know who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and who has simply chosen to do evil? Are you not judging others, and not forgiving them, if you try to decide who has and who has not blasphemed, spoken against, God? If you can determine who they are, are you supposed to love those who have rejected God and embraced evil? Perhaps you should love them, perhaps not. Perhaps they are no longer your neighbor and you should not love them, perhaps not. There is an argument that you should neither hate nor love those who have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you should totally reject them, perhaps not. Certainly you must completely separate yourself from their evil. Perhaps you should cut yourself off from them completely, perhaps with the exception of giving them food when they are hungry, etc. At the very least you must be certain not to let those who may have blasphemed the Holy Spirit influence your life in any way. You must never commit the eternal sin.

You must decide for yourself how to treat those who have committed the eternal sin. You must decide for yourself how to treat those who you believe may have committed the eternal sin. Your answer to the question of how to treat those who have or may have committed the eternal sin, who have or may have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, must come from the knowledge and understanding of God's love, of God's will, you have when you complete your search of your heart, mind, and soul.

Love - A Reason for Living

I have almost absolute faith that you can and should "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself", nothing more, nothing less, period.

Distress and depression

We have received comments from readers who tell us that our ideas caused them to be distressed and depressed. If you are one of those readers you need to consider the following. As human beings become anxious they often lose their focus and misinterpret what they are reading. If you understand what we are saying, there is absolutely no reason to be depressed by our ideas.

Why not? First, we may be wrong. What we conclude to be true and correct may not be. Yet beyond the fact that we cannot be sure we are right, the fact is that if we are right, for the vast majority there is nothing to fear or dread. This fact is extremely difficult to accept if you are searching for meaning in your life, you do not believe that there is a life after death, and you are discouraged or depressed before you start reading. When you read our ideas they may touch raw nerves, and you may stop understanding what we are saying.

Either there is a life after death or there is no life after death. If there is no life after death and we are correct when we conclude that physical death annihilates our past, present, and future, then there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to be even the slightest bit distressed or depressed. If physical death annihilates your past, present, and future, then after your physical death you are consumed by a totally peaceful void, with absolutely no pain or sorrow or other negative result. There is no logical or rational way whatsoever to conclude that there is any negative consequence if your ultimate end is a nihilistic death.

If your mind is not receptive and clear, then you may have a violent reaction to our conclusions about death if there is no life after death, a reaction that ignores the fact that there cannot be anything to fear about such a death. It is human nature to attack anything that suggests that our life today may be destroyed by death, yet that reaction can have no rational basis in logic. If your past, present, and future is annihilated by your physical death, after your death you will not suffer pain or sorrow or regrets or anything negative at all, period.

Furthermore, if your past, present, and future is annihilated by your physical death, that fact can have no affect whatsoever on today, on now. If a nihilistic death lies in your future, it cannot affect your present at all. You can live every day, from now to the moment of your death, to the fullest. It is very important to understand that every person who is unwilling to believe that there is a life after physical death can live a positive life for the rest of their life, loving their neighbor, doing that which is good, with the hope that physical life does have meaning and purpose. There is no reason whatsoever for those who are unwilling to believe that there is a life after physical death to be depressed, there is every reason for them to do that which is good and live the most positive life they are willing to live. If you are unwilling to believe that there is life after physical death, there is every reason for you to do that which is good and live a positive life, with the hope that your life may have meaning and purpose.

Many who are deeply depressed believe that their lives are meaningless, and to escape the pain of living they seek the peace of suicide. If you are suicidal it may be very difficult for you to accept the fact that if there is no life after death and we are correct when we conclude that physical death annihilates our past, present, and future, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to commit suicide. If your physical death is a nihilistic death, there is no reason to end your life now because you will experience the same “peaceful” end if you die next year, or twenty years from now. Your mind may be too clouded to understand what we are saying, yet if you are suicidal you must take whatever time it takes to fully understand, and you must seek immediate professional help (see below).

If on your physical death your past, present, and future are annihilated, there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to commit suicide, because all the physical and emotional pain you suffer in your life, now or next week or next year, will be annihilated whenever you die, even if your death does not occur for many, many, years. It is simple logic that if no matter how far in the future a nihilistic death occurs, it causes all pain that you ever suffered to be as if it never happened, then there can be no logical reason whatsoever to commit suicide now to avoid future pain, period. Committing suicide necessarily eliminates all possibility of finding meaning and purpose in your life. You cannot know if a nihilistic death awaits you or not. Even if there is a nihilistic death in your future you cannot know that there is, so there is no reason whatsoever not to live for the possibility, no matter how remote you may believe it to be, that in the future you will find meaning and purpose, and perhaps happiness, in your life.

No matter what we may think or you may think right now, there is always a possibility that your life has meaning and purpose. If there is a life after death, or if there is no life after death, there is always a possibility that sometime in the future you will find meaning and purpose in your life. If in fact there is a life after death then there is every reason to live for the hope that you will enjoy a peaceful existence after death. If in fact there is no life after death then there is every reason to live for the hope that your physical existence has meaning and purpose. Even if there is no life after death and physical death annihilates our past, there is no reason whatsoever not to live for the possibility your physical existence has meaning and purpose right now, simply because during your physical life on earth you can never, never, know with any degree of certainty whether your life has, or does not have, meaning.

If you are depressed and suicidal it is extremely difficult for you to see the absolute fact that there is absolutely no reason not to live every moment of your natural life for the possibility that you may find meaning and purpose and happiness in your life. There can be no reason whatsoever to commit suicide and eliminate the possibility that your life has meaning and purpose. There can be no reason whatsoever to eliminate the possibility that you will eventually find, if not joy and happiness, at the very least peace and contentment in your life.

We have readers who indicate that they are distressed and depressed by the possibility that they may have committed the eternal sin. If God exists and if there is an eternal sin, then God gives us the choice to commit the eternal sin or not to commit the eternal sin, period. It would seem that those who have not committed the eternal sin would be distressed if they believed that they might have committed the eternal sin. It would seem that the very fact that someone is distressed by the belief that they may have committed the eternal sin may suggest that they have in fact not committed the eternal sin.

It seems that physical and mental disease may cause extreme anxiety and depression, and may lead a person to believe that they have committed the eternal sin and that they will live in hell after their death when in fact they have not committed the eternal sin. It appears that mental illness may cause a person who has not committed the eternal sin to believe that that they may have committed the eternal sin. If you are distressed and depressed by the possibility that you have committed the eternal sin, then you need to talk with those who have not committed the eternal sin, including ministers and religious counselors. If there is any chance at all that you are suffering from physical or mental disease, you also need to consult health professionals. Talk to

several people, especially mental health professionals if there is any possibility of mental problems, so that you may better determine what you have and have not done. It can be very difficult to find qualified professionals, and even when you do find them, it can be very difficult to tell them about your fears. Find qualified professionals and talk to them. You need to overcome any reluctance you may have to talking with those who might help you, and be willing to allow them to help you decide what you really believe is true. Seek professional help now!

If you do not yet understand the fact that there is no reason whatsoever to be disturbed or depressed by our conclusions, including our conclusion that if there is no life after death, then your past, present, and future may be annihilated on your physical death, then you still do not understand what we are saying. Please take as much time as you need to reread and carefully think about what we are saying, until you satisfy yourself that there is in fact absolutely no reason to be depressed by our conclusions, and absolutely no reason whatsoever for any human being to commit suicide.

DEPRESSION IS A MEDICAL CONDITION, IF YOU ARE DEPRESSED, FOR ANY REASON, YOU MUST SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP NOW!

(from the National Mental Health Association website - <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/suicide>):

Life is full of good times and bad, of happiness and sorrow. But when you are feeling "down" for more than a few weeks or you have difficulty functioning in daily life, you may be suffering from a common, yet serious medical illness - called clinical depression.

You are not alone

Every year more than 19 million American Adults suffer from clinical depression. Young or old, man or woman, regardless of race or income - anyone can experience clinical depression. Depression can cause people to lose the pleasure from daily life. It can complicate other medical conditions - it can be serious enough to lead to suicide. Yet this suffering is unnecessary. Clinical depression is a very treatable medical illness. So why don't many people seek the help they need?

Clinical depression often goes untreated because people don't recognize the many symptoms.

They may know some symptoms, such as sadness and withdrawal, but they are unaware of others, including anxiety, irritability, and sleeplessness. Some incorrectly believe that only people whose depression lasts for months, or who have completely lost their ability to function, have "real" - or "clinical" - depression. Many people even wrongly think that depression is "normal" for older people, young adults, new mothers, menopausal women, or those with a chronic illness. The truth is, clinical depression is never "normal," no matter what your age or life situation. Also, people need to know that treatment for clinical depression really works - and to learn how to go about finding the treatment they need.

Clinical Depression can be Successfully Treated

Clinical depression is one of the most treatable of all medical illnesses. In fact, more than 80 percent of people with depression can be treated successfully with medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both. Only a qualified health professional can determine if someone has clinical depression. But knowing the symptoms of clinical depression can help you as you talk with your health professional.

As with many illnesses, if treatment is needed, the earlier it begins, the more effective it can be. And, early treatment increases the likelihood of preventing serious recurrences.

You Do Not Have to Cope with Clinical Depression on Your Own

Some people are embarrassed to get help for depression, or they are reluctant to talk about how they are feeling. Others believe that depression will go away on its own. You can't just "Tough it out!" Help is available.

Talking to friends, family members and clergy can often give people the support needed when going through life's difficult times. For those with clinical depression such support is important, but it is not a substitute for the care of a health professional. Remember, clinical depression is a serious illness that you do not have to treat on your own.

Depression (from the National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml):

A depressive disorder is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about things. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a depressive illness cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people who suffer from depression.

Also see: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/depression.html>

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