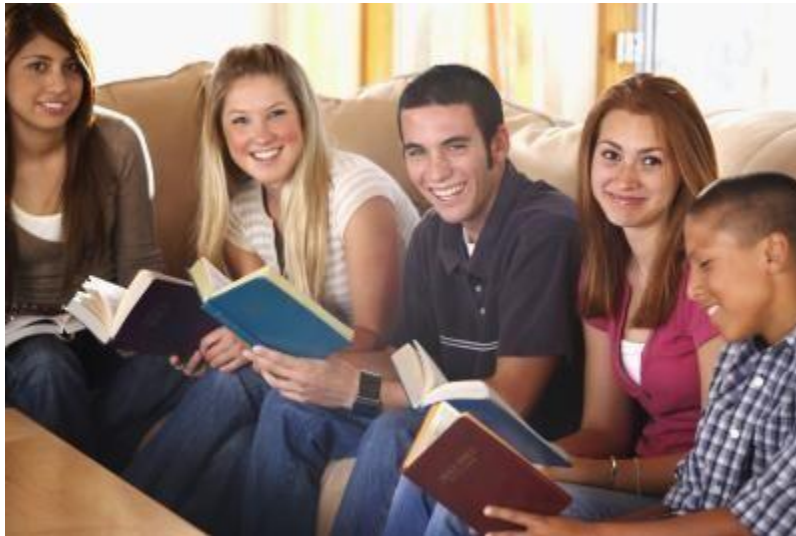


SKY Articles for Teens



Be inspired to be a follower of Christ. These articles will help empower you to make wise decisions and discover how to experience a vital Christian lifestyle.



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Depending on God

by Loren M. Chamberlain

Most people believe they can do almost anything in today's world. Scientists are discovering cures for diseases that were once thought to be incurable. Virtual reality can take us places we never thought possible. Sports records are being shattered on a daily basis. Technology and the information age has made it possible for humans to do a great deal with their minds, bodies, abilities and talents. However, humans are still just flesh and blood. No matter how far we advance intellectually or physically, we will never come close to being as awesome and as powerful as God. We live in a world under the sway of Satan. The impressions we receive from the world is that we must be tough, strong, unbending and harsh, but we are reminded by the word of God that it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." The key words are "by my spirit" (Zechariah 4:6).

It is only through God's Spirit that anything of lasting value is accomplished. God is on the side of the follower of Christ. As you live for God, determine not to trust in your own strength or abilities, but instead depend on God and work in the power of His Spirit. God wants us to depend on His Spirit, learning to trust His Spirit instead of our own power.

There are certain things His Spirit can do that we could never accomplish in our own strength. God's Spirit leads in many different ways. No matter how smart or strong we think we are, we can't outdo the Spirit of God. In 1 Chronicles we read, "Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything" (1 Chronicles 29:11, TLB). Dependence on God means counting on His control of everything. Though we live in a world that is constantly changing and mostly for the worse rather than the better, we must put our lives in the hands of our Saviour Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). As we look around the world, watching life come and go, material things decaying and friends changing, the only thing we can truly rely on is God's control. His purpose for us and His love never changes. Once we truly comprehend this wholeheartedly, we will have real peace and security. To truly depend on God means counting on Him for our daily needs.

When life seems easy we depend on our own skills and abilities, but we turn to God when we feel unable to solve life's problems for ourselves. To depend on God is not defeat or weakness, but an admission and realization that without Him we are powerless and need contact with Him constantly. God is our source of power and it is by staying in constant contact with Him we receive His help in our time of need. By cultivating this attitude, problems will drive us to God rather than away from Him. We must practice and learn how to rely and depend on God daily.

Dependence on God also means counting on the power of prayer. The disciples of Jesus often faced many difficult and dangerous situations that could only be resolved by prayer. Prayer is a great key which gives us a personal relationship with our Father and unlocks the faith of Christ in us.

Effective prayer needs at least two things: an attitude of complete dependence on God, and an action which involves asking. Prayer demonstrates our total reliance on God as we with a humble attitude invite Him to fill us with the faith and power of Jesus Christ. There is no substitute for prayer if we are to deal effectively with impossible circumstances. God the Father through Jesus Christ is the only one we can totally depend on in our time of continuing need.

God Loves His Youth

by Loren M. Chamberlain

It was really great when you got that letter or e-mail from an older friend or relative who is really important to you, right? You didn't skip a line when you read it, did you? You probably read every word and some of them more than once.

That is very likely how it was for young Timothy when he received the apostle Paul's letters. Timothy was like a son to Paul. You can tell from Paul's letters to Timothy that he loved him very much. Paul took him on trips and taught him important things. Paul invested a great deal in young Timothy's life.

One of the neat things about those letters Paul sent to Timothy was that Paul was writing to a young person. Paul was sure Timothy had a lot to offer and Timothy was willing to listen and learn. We are reminded by these letters that God uses people of all ages. No matter how young or old you are, if you are willing, have faith in God and love others, God can use you.

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Good Enough For God?

by Loren M. Chamberlain

Are we good enough for God? Well, no we aren't. But just because we are not good enough for God does not mean that He will not save us. Sometimes we might even think, "salvation is for everyone but me!" If these thoughts ever crossed your mind, you probably aren't alone. However, take the time to read this cool verse. "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

Isn't that great? If God gave His son for you, He isn't going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave His life for you, He isn't going to turn around and condemn you! God really wants to give you all things. Of course He is not going to give you your own Jet aircraft if you are still working on getting your auto drivers license. Neither would your parents. (Please love them, respect them, and obey them. You really will make points with God by doing so.)

God is a great giver. A lot of people are under the impression that God is a taker-- always wanting something from them, but this is not true. Notice Jesus' own words in John 10:10. "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." God wants you blessed with abundance. Satan is the thief who comes to steal your lunch and everything else you've got. Satan is the one who accuses. However, we needn't fear, because Jesus is interceding for us in heaven right now and God has acquitted us and removed our sin and guilt. You see, Jesus is the advocate for our defense, and He stands at God's right hand to present our case. He mediates between God and us. As our representative, He intercedes for us before God and assures us of God's forgiveness. Naturally, we must be sorry for sinning against God and ask Him to forgive us in the name of His Son Jesus. Jesus has more authority than anyone else because He is truly God and truly man. He is always at God's right hand and always available when we pray.

God wants to give you the desires of your heart, up to a point. Obviously, He is not going to give you what is contrary to His law. There is a principle here that is good to remember. "God will not bless anything that is contrary to His Law." So, it is a wise thing to consider what we ask God for. It is also a wise thing to seek after Him. When we do, with all our heart, He will then begin to put good desires in our hearts. As we begin to understand how good and how right His desires are for us they'll become our desires too. Also, remember your parents. They love you. They want the best for you just as God does. And lets face it, parents know us pretty well, so seek their advice.

In the coming years you'll make many important decisions about your future. No matter how carefully you plan, the results are not completely in your hands. Trust God to be with you as you make a decision, and when you act on it. There are few opportunities that come without risk, and every decision you make is an opportunity to grow, mentally, physically, and spiritually. As you put your hand in the Hand of God, know that He will guide you and bless you as you travel His pathway of life while you make decisions that will shape your life for the good of yourself and others.

Are we good enough for God? The answer is still No! But, God is more than good enough for us, and He wants to give us "All Things."

Check out these Scriptures: **Romans 8:31-39; Psalm 37:4; Psalm 2:8; John 14:14; Hebrews 4:14-16.**

Joseph, A Young Teenager!

by Loren M. Chamberlain

It seems that some young people know exactly what they will accomplish in life. In Joseph's case, God gave him a vivid set of dreams that placed him in the role of ruler over his father and eleven brothers. His brothers naturally believed their younger brother was arrogant, rude, and silly.

Joseph was only seventeen. He had great confidence and self-assurance, which was increased by being his father's (Jacob), favorite son, but most of all by knowing of God's designs on his life. Do you know God's designs for your life? Being a favorite son of his father created an unbearable situation between Joseph and his older brothers, who eventually conspired against him. Their jealousy and anger grew to the point where they considered killing him, but decided instead to sell him into slavery. What his brothers didn't know was that they were actually working out God's plan. Joseph was still a teenager when he found himself a slave in Egypt.

Though now only a slave, Joseph did not give up his personal integrity and work ethic. By his own personal efforts, he earned the trust of others. No matter what life handed him, Joseph was determined to make a difference, and he worked at it. He put to use the many abilities and talents God had given him. Only a slave now, he worked to make a difference in his master's home. Though innocent and unfairly imprisoned, he made a difference in prison. Given an opportunity to serve, he made a difference in a nation.

By his efforts and with God's help Joseph established a massive preparation for a coming famine, which saved Egypt and her neighbors. Later, Joseph was to see his dream come true. His entire family bowed before him, not recognizing him as a brother but appreciating his generosity as the magistrate of Egypt. Joseph knew God's hand was on his life. Never did his confidence in that fact diminish. His present circumstance never caused him to limit the power and ability of God to make a difference through his life. He was betrayed and deserted by his family, exposed to sexual temptation, and punished for doing the right thing. He endured a long imprisonment and was forgotten by those he helped. In spite of all these unfair things, his positive response transformed each setback into a step forward.

Finally in the end of the story Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me. So they came near. Then he said: I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." (Genesis 45: 4-8)

The vision you have of your future may not be as clear to you as Joseph's vision was to him, but that does not mean that God does not have plans for your life. Neither does this mean that your confidence in God should be less than Joseph's or diminished in anyway. The key is to remember, that faith doesn't rest on a vision, but on God. God is certainly big enough to work out His plans in your life, no matter what trials, tribulations, or obstacles you encounter. So develop a Joseph-like attitude that demonstrates that God is with you!

Check out these Scriptures: **Genesis 37-50; Hebrews 11:21, 22.**

Problem Solving! Teens Want To Know!: How can I solve my problems?

by Loren M. Chamberlain

Been getting any jabs or snide remarks lately for being a Christian? Have you been laughed at lately? Been made fun of because you returned a Twenty dollar bill you found to it's rightful owner? Well, take heart, relief is on its way. When Jesus returns He will give you rest from Troubles. You won't have to fight your own battles anymore because Jesus is going to take over in flaming fire with His powerful angels. All your enemies who would persecute you will be vanquished by Jesus, your personal Savior! Many times we face battles that are too big for us. The trouble seems overwhelming. Be courageous and wise enough to know which battles are yours and which battles are the Lords. Let the Lord fight those overwhelming battles for you.

Oh sure, its easy to say, "Let the Lord fight my battles for me," but how do I do that? Well, on the one hand it could be very easy. On the other hand it may be a little awkward in the beginning. We all know what it's like when me meet someone new. We just aren't sure what to say or do. We may want to be friends with someone, but how do we make this new person in our life a "Lifetime Friend?"

Why are the characters in funny papers or comic strips presented as Super-Heroes? All people need friends and everyone needs help from time to time with super-problems of life they can't seem to solve alone. People gravitate to Super-Heroes like Superman, Superwoman, Batman, Spiderman, etc. Wouldn't we all like to have a real Super-Hero for our best friend?

How did we establish a relationship with our best friend-- by sharing many things about ourselves with that person. Perhaps even our future hopes and dreams. We spend a lot of time with friends, so we get to know them pretty well. We find out where they live, what kind of clothes they like to wear, what kind of car they would like, and even their future hopes and dreams. Most importantly, do they have trust-worthy character or are they a character! We may confide in a best friend, sharing some of our most sacred secrets. In other words, we spend a lot of time with our friends and therefore, we learn whether we can trust them or not. That's why some of them turn out to be best friends and sadly, some don't. Guess what happens when our best friends move away and we fail to keep in contact with them? We lose touch with them and we become very sad because we know how hard it is to find a good friend.

Well, if only people knew it, they could all have real Super-Heros for their best friends. All they have to do is get in touch with Them. Of course I'm talking about God the Father and Jesus and you can talk to Them anytime. They are the greatest of all "Super-Heroes." So how do we get in touch? By a method called "Prayer." Greater still, there isn't a single problem They can't solve. We can tell Them all our problems, good or bad, and They will still be our best friends. They won't tell anyone our secrets, They won't move away from us, They will supply all our needs and yes, sometimes many of our wants too. Got a major problem? Ask God the Father for the answer to any overwhelming problem, and tell Him Jesus sent you! He can, and will solve your problems and overcome all your enemies. Not only that, but if we make God the Father and Jesus Christ the centrality of our life, They will be our best friends, and They will give us Eternal Life.

Whether we know it or not, problems are inevitable. However, we don't have to face them alone. What we need to know is how to respond to them. James says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:2-4, NIV) James assumes we are going to have problems, but we can profit from them. The point is not to pretend to be happy when we face painful problems, but to have a positive outlook ("consider it pure joy") because of what problems can produce in our life. James wants us to turn these problems into times of learning. Tough times can teach us tough lessons and perseverance. Surely we have all heard the old cliché, "When things get Tough, the Tough get going." God wants us to be strong, not a bunch of whining wimps!

For further personal Bible Study look up these other Scriptures dealing with perseverance (also called patience and steadfastness), see **Romans 2:7; 5:3- 5; 8:24-25; 2 Corinthians 6:3-7; and 2 Peter 1:3-9**

Why Does God Allow Bad Things to Happen?

by Noni McVey

How can a loving, merciful and kind God allow tragedies such as the terrorist attacks on America? How can a loving God allow war, sickness, pain and death? Is He a God that does not care about human suffering or is He the all-powerful supreme Creator of the entire universe?

God created us in His image and likeness. He is the Creator of our minds. In fact, when He created us, He saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good (Genesis 1:31). We were not created with an evil nature, but with the ability to choose right from wrong. It is not in God's plan to produce instant character in us. He knows how perfect character is developed. Good character comes from the ability to decide between right and wrong and then to have the will power to do what is right. The terrorists that killed so many in New York and Washington did not choose to do good, they chose to do evil instead.

We are now left with the pain and suffering of the choices the terrorists made. God does not like it when people make such terrible choices. He condemns it. When Jesus saw the suffering in Jerusalem, He wept about it. Jesus wants everyone to live by His standards. God does not get upset that we ask such questions. God does blame man because man is the one who has sinned. God cannot be blamed because He is righteous. There are many scriptures that ask why God allows bad things to happen. Such as in Jeremiah 12:1, You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper?

We must not allow ourselves to second guess God's decision or question His motives about why He allows such suffering. Isaiah 55:8 says, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. In Job 38, we read about how Job questioned God about why He was allowing him to suffer. The Lord answered Job, Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

In times of great suffering, we must eventually wipe our tears away and take a look at the good that may be occurring. In the midst of all the suffering since the terrorist attacks, many have turned to God for comfort. From the suffering have come compassion and a showing of great love for ones neighbor. The stories of heroism and courage in the sight of danger have brought tears to the eyes of everyone who has listened. We have learned about the importance of justice because we have experienced injustice.

We must have faith that God will take this evil and turn it to good for His purpose. It takes tremendous courage to believe that there is something better than our earthly existence. There is the soon coming Kingdom of God when our savior Jesus Christ will return to this earth and establish His Kingdom. There will no longer be war, pain, illness or suffering. Our ultimate goal is to be born into the God Family and be joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).