



The Bible Banner

July 2019



NO EXCUSES

A lighthouse along a bleak coast was tended by a keeper who was given enough oil for one month and told to keep the light burning every night. One day a woman asked for oil so that her children could stay warm. Then a farmer came. His son needed oil for a lamp so he could read. Still another needed some for an engine. The keeper saw each as a worthy request and measured out just enough oil to satisfy all. Near the end of the month, the tank in the lighthouse ran dry. That night the beacon was dark and three ships crashed on the rocks. More than 100 lives were lost.

When a government official investigated, the man explained what he had done and why.

"You were given one task alone," insisted the official. "It was to keep the light burning. Everything else was secondary. There is no defense."

Do you get distracted from your purpose and make excuses for not letting your light shine for Jesus?

MOCK EGG SALAD

1 batch scrambled tofu* ½ cup homemade mayonnaise**
 ½ cup onions, chopped 1/3 cup olives, chopped
 1/3 cup celery, sliced 1/3 cup lemon pickle relish***
 Just mix together and spread.

***Scrambled Tofu** --1 pkg. 16 oz. pkg. water-packed tofu,
 1 tsp chicken-like seasoning, 1 tsp Lawry's- like seasoning,
 ¼ tsp turmeric. Mash tofu and scramble in skillet over medium heat until
 flavors are absorbed and tofu turns a light yellow color.

****Homemade Veggienaise** -- ½ cup olive oil, ¼ cup soymilk, 2 Tbsp lemon juice salt, to taste
 Blend oil and soymilk in the blender. Add lemon juice last. Salt to taste.

*****Lemon-Pickle Relish** -- ½ cup lemon juice, ½ cup water, ½ cup honey, ½ cup organic sugar, 4 tsp salt, 1 quart
 cucumber slices (4 cups), 1 small red pepper, chopped; ¼ tsp celery salt. Refrigerate 24 hours. For relish, drain off liquid
 (save) and process in food processor. You may add desired amount of liquid back. To can: Simmer 10 minutes. Process for
 10 minutes in a boiling water canner. (1/4 inch head space) I use Jelly jars.



Quotable Quotes

***"Lord, when we are
 wrong, make us willing to
 change.***

***And when we are right,
 make us easy to live
 with."*** —P. Marshall

PROFITABLE TRADITIONS

Cultivate Love of Missions – For a special family (or church) activity, pick out a country and plan a special dinner and program about that country. Do your research. Then fix and eat foods similar to those in your chosen country. Learn words, phrases or a hymn from the country, and read stories about a missionary to that country.

"Instead of dwelling on the exploits of the Alexanders and the Napoleons of history, let the pupils study the lives of such men as the apostle Paul and Martin Luther, as Moffat [Africa] and Livingstone [Africa] and Carey [India], Judson [Burma], and Williams [New Hebrides], and Morrison [China], and the present daily-unfolding of history of missionary effort". (GCB, July 1, 1902 par. 16)



UNLICENSED EXCUSE

Recently, I read the story of a woman in New Zealand who drove for 25 years without a license. When she was caught, she explained to the judge who fined her, *"I only drove on roads that have very little traffic. And none of those roads lead to an office where I could apply for a driver's license."* (NANA-WNS) Apparently, getting a driver's license wasn't convenient for her. Likewise, many make excuses for not accepting the gospel. When Paul appealed to Felix, he gave a similar explanation. *"And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."* Acts 24:25



Many today are also waiting for a "convenient season" to reform their lives. They want to wait until it is convenient to change their diet and be temperate – *"Certainly not while I am on vacation"*. They wait for a convenient time to change their dress and follow God's way – *"Perhaps if it comes into style."* They wait for a convenient time to change their entertainment to God's righteous specifications – *"But my family are visiting, maybe after they leave."* They make excuses, *"When it is convenient, and I have time, I will spend more time in Bible study."* My mother used to tell me, *"An excuse is just the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie."* The truth is, when conviction comes, if you don't make the change then, soon conviction will die away and you will never make the change. You might as well say like Agrippa to Paul, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* Acts 26:28 The words of the sad hymn "Almost Persuaded" tells the story of those who make excuses and wait for "some more convenient day" to be a Christian. *"Almost' cannot avail; 'Almost' is but to fail! Sad, sad, that bitter wail—'Almost — but lost."*

Prophetic News Notes –Grapefruit-sized Hail

A recent report from the Mirror stated that *"Hailstones as big as grapefruits hammered several countries across Europe, causing chaos and damaging thousands of homes and buildings. The fierce hailstorm has battered parts of Slovenia, Croatia and Germany since Monday [June 10, 2019] as strong gale-force winds brought cold temperatures along with intense rainfall."*



Weather advisor, Mr. Korosec added: *"I was completely shocked to see so many big hailstones there. We were expecting very large hail, maybe 5cm*

*to 7cm in some areas - but I never thought I would find hailstones the size of grapefruits."*¹

It is reported that before they began melting, some of the hailstones would have measured 14 cm in diameter. As one might imagine *"There was significant damage to cars and houses, complete destruction in some areas. Most of the roofs of houses were completely destroyed, cars as well - all windows and windshields shattered."*¹



God will use hail as one of the seven last plagues. It is evident that before this time He is trying to wake people up to the fact that we are living in a time of judgement. God's aim is to call mankind to repent and turn to Jesus Christ before the judgment closes and it is forever too late.



Rev. 11:18,19 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Rev. 16:1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth... And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."* Revelation 16:21.

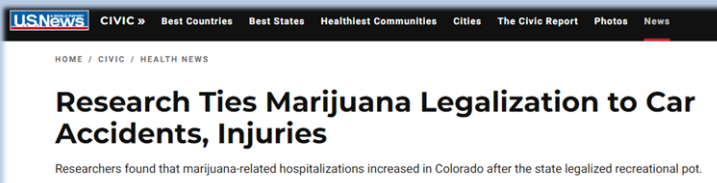
1-- <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/hailstones-size-grapefruits-lash-hundreds-16505804>

“But it’s an Herb”

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, *“marijuana is the most commonly used illegal drug in America (marijuana is “illegal” in the sense that it is a controlled substance under federal law, with no recognized legitimate value).”*¹

Government reports suggest that over 80 million Americans have tried marijuana. Many are even touting its “health benefits” claiming that *“it is an herb”* and several states have even legalized it.” However, before recently visiting a national park, I learned that although some states have decriminalized possession of marijuana, those laws have no effect on federal lands. That means *“You can still be charged with a crime if you are in possession of marijuana in a federal park.”*²

Scientific research and studies show there are some potential problems with classing marijuana or cannabis as a harmless herb instead of as mind-altering drug. For example, *“US News and World Report”* states that ***“The legalization of recreational marijuana is associated with a rise of injuries, substance abuse and car accidents, according to new research. A study published Wednesday in the journal BMJ Open found that Colorado hospital admissions for cannabis abuse increased after the drug was legalized in the state. Researchers found that car accidents in Colorado increased 10% after legalization, and increases in alcohol abuse and overdoses that resulted in injury or death increased by 5%.”***³



Perhaps the reason for this is because, *“Marijuana effects on the brain give you more than just that immediate sensation of pleasure; using it habitually can disrupt your hormone levels, weaken your memory, and cause a variety of learning dysfunction ailments. Marijuana affects the brain and its cell receptors, thus, there is absolutely no doubt that using it has negative consequences on your brain’s health, immediately and in the long-run.”*⁴

*“The adverse marijuana effects on the brain are more shocking and worrisome than any other side effect proven yet. New studies have confirmed that cannabinoids in the drug directly affect the cells in your brain’s mitochondria, leading to partial or total memory loss, also known as amnesia. In addition to that disturbing fact, these cannabinoids from Cannabis Sativa (marijuana) reduce the cellular respiration in your brain’s mitochondria, thus, a reduction of converting nutrients into energy occurs.”*⁴

Marijuana use makes it harder to remember and learn new things, as well as reducing the capability for problem-solving and thinking. This effectively reduces the IQ— especially in teens and young adults. *“It disrupts the development of circuits,” said Dr. Paula Riggs, a substance abuse expert and professor of psychiatry at the University of Colorado. ‘The latest study shows that regular use when you’re an adolescent is associated with a 6-to-8 point reduction in IQ.’”*⁵



Other undesirable mental effects may include (listed from immediate to long-term): uncontrollable laughter at inappropriate times, impaired attention and judgement, increased distractibility, mood variations, reformed sense of time, increased vulnerability to schizophrenia, learning dysfunctions, decline in verbal ability, decrease in cognitive ability, and neuropsychological decline.⁴

But the negative effects of marijuana are not limited to the brain. *“In addition, marijuana use has been linked to physical health effects, including but not limited to...imbalance of hormones, ongoing phlegm or a cough, and paranoia [feeling that ‘everyone is out to get me’]...”*⁴ Although *“according to scientific studies, the active ingredient in cannabis, THC, remains in the body for weeks or even months.”* even *“the immediate effects of taking marijuana include rapid heartbeat, disorientation, lack of physical coordination, often followed by depression or sleepiness. Some users suffer panic attacks or anxiety...”*⁶

As one might expect there are also negative effects on the lungs of those who smoke marijuana. *“One major research study reported that a single cannabis joint could cause as much damage to the lungs as up to five regular cigarettes smoked one after another. Long-time joint smokers often suffer from bronchitis, an inflammation of the respiratory tract...”*⁶

Other negative effects of marijuana use in the long-term include: possible addiction, irregular menstrual cycle due to imbalance of hormones, imbalance of cortisol levels in the blood stream, negative effects on sperm production, impairment in development of epithelial cells in lung tissues, risk of heart attack more likely, decreased appetite, and chronic cough.⁴

Evidently, marijuana cannot really be classed as a “harmless herb” after all. For *“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”* Matt. 7:20

1--<https://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/crime-penalties/federal/Marijuana-Possession.htm> 2-- <https://www.wklaw.com/consequences-of-possession-of-marijuana-in-a-federal-park/>

3-- <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2019-05-15/study-ties-legalizing-pot-to-car-accidents-injuries>

4--https://www.dr1am.com/blog/marijuana-effects-on-the-brain/35045/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Supplement&utm_campaign=171130

5--<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/ways-marijuana-kill/story?id=22350551> 6-- <https://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/marijuana/the-harmful-effects.html>



The “It’s Innocent” Excuse—A Sad But True Story

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men [make excuses]; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16:15

It was in the large parlors of a mansion in Missouri, where on a pleasant October evening, ten or twelve young people were gathered from the wealthiest homes of the elite of the city. Among them was a young woman who, though always genial and social with the young, was ever clad in mourning garb, and bore the name of Mara, chosen by herself to express the grief and bitterness of her life, since the time she, seven or eight years before, had been bereft of all her family.

The pleasant hours flew fast till about half past ten in the evening, when one of the company pulled out a pack of cards and flung it on the table where Mara Moore was sitting. The effect was startling.

Her face took on a deathly pallor; she trembled, arose from her seat, staggered across the room, and took a chair in the remotest corner. So great was her agitation that everyone saw it, but none was aware of the cause.

One of the party, who had been reading law for some time, not imagining the seriousness of her anguish, went to her, and in a bantering way threatened her with legal prosecution before an impaneled jury in case she refused to return to her place at the table, and submit to the regulations of the evening. While the lawyer was urging her to this, a thoughtless young man of the company stepped up to them and placed a few cards in her hand. She jerked her hand away, and gave it a sling as if to rid it of the contaminating filth of the cards; and, with an agonizing scream, she began weeping and sobbing as if her heart would break.



Surprised at this new outburst, the lawyer sought to soothe the wounded spirit; and when she had become somewhat quiet, he, with the rest, entreated her to give them the reason for her terrible agitation. This she at first refused to do, but being urged very strongly by all the company, she at length consented. At the first word a shudder passed over her whole frame; but pausing to regain her self-control, she began;-

“When I was nineteen years old, I was living in an Eastern city, in one of the happiest homes within its limits. A rich and tender father, with a loving and gentle mother, and as bright and true a brother as ever a sister could want, were my companions in the delightful home of my childhood. Wealth and comfort smiled upon us, and prophesied of a future happiness, until, with my own hand, I plucked down upon us all, the greatest curse imaginable.

“Two of our cousins, a brother and sister, came to visit us, and we spent the evening in pleasant conversation, as we did this evening; and just as those cards were thrown on the table, and about the same hour, my parents having retired, our cousin threw a deck upon the table. They two and I sat down to play, while my dear and tenderly loved brother, not liking the idea of playing cards, turned to the music he was composing as a graduating exercise for examination day, and went to work on that. We three needed a fourth one to make the game go properly, and we began trying to persuade my brother to come and take part with us; but he declared he thought it was not right to spend time card playing—that it was an amusement of the lowest character, and he did not want to get into it.

“After using all our arguments to induce him to assist us, but to no purpose, **I went to him, put my arm around his neck, and told him I was a Christian, and trying to get to heaven, and thought it no harm** to play cards just for amusement; that I thought he ought to lay aside his scruples, and come and help us, as we could have no fun without his help; that he was too fastidious anyway. With this he arose from his seat very reluctantly, and came, protesting that he knew nothing about it. We told him he could soon learn and he did, only too quickly; for, in a little time, he was enough for any of us; and when we three tired of the sport, he was so delighted with it that he sat for an hour studying the cards and shuffling them.

“We laughed heartily at him for his interest in the matter, and finally retired for the night, leaving him with the cards. Next morning he took them up again, and tried to induce us to play with him; but our cousins had to go home, and soon left us, taking the deck with them. But the fatal act had been done. That night, my brother was out in the city until a late hour, which was a thing that had never occurred before. When he came home he seemed morose; and to our inquiries for the cause, his replies were evasive.

“The next night he was out again; and this continued for some nights, until his money—two hundred dollars—was all gone. He then went to my father for more, and, as he had unbounded confidence in my brother, father gave him quite a little sum., without asking what he was going to do with it. This was soon gone.

Continued from pg. 4

When he asked for more, father desired him to tell what he was doing with so much money. Not receiving a direct answer, father gave him a small sum, and told him he could get no more unless he would give a clear report of the use he made of his money. This money was soon spent, and when he went for more, but was unwilling to account for what he had received, father refused to give him more. With this refusal he became angry, and told father he would make him willing to let him have the money. My brother then went out into the city again, and, as usual, into a gambling-den, where he managed to get money for gaming, or sat and looked on. He was absent for nearly a week.

"During this time my mother neither ate nor slept, as I might say; and when my brother was brought home drunk, she took to her bed, and never got up again, but died of a broken heart, within a few days.

"We hoped this would stop my brother's course, but it did so only for a short time. He soon began gambling and drinking again; and, being young and rather delicate, it was not long until he was brought home in delirium tremens. Upon this my father took to his bed, languished, sank, and died, leaving myself and my brother alone in the world. O, how I wished I could die, too! But it seemed that God determined that I should see the end of my work in wrecking our family, and I was compelled to still remain and reap the harvest of my own doings.

"Every influence that could be brought to bear on my poor brother I made use of, but to no avail; and, O how I prayed for him! But it was of no use! He went even more rapidly down the way of ruin, now that father was dead and out of his way. Only a few weeks after I had followed my father to his resting-place in the silent grave, my brother was brought home with delirium tremens again, and after suffering for a short time the most terrible agony, the poor boy died, and was laid in a drunkard's grave. O my God! Why was I ever born? Why cannot I die, too? But what will my eternity be for having thus ruined my own brother, the bright and beautiful boy? This is why I spell my name Mara."

Soon after the lady commenced her sad story, the ladies in the company began weeping; and when it was finished, they were all sobbing as if their hearts would break; and the eyes of the men also were moist. The cards had disappeared, and vows were solemnly expressed by the entire company that never again would one of them be guilty of engaging in that sport, but they would ever do their best to endeavor to put the practice out of society.

"Satan presides... he throws around the card-table its bewitching power. Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget their Creator, there Satan is at work, it matters not how innocent the guise under which he conceals his purpose." {ST, May 18, 1882, par. 23}



STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED—Man's Excuses and God's Answers

Read Luke 14:16-24 *"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:.. And **they all with one consent began to make excuse...**"* Luke 14:16-18 Here are a few of man's many excuses for not following God's Way.

Excuse: Property/riches *"The first said...I have bought **a piece of ground**, and I must needs go and see it...have me excused."* Lu 14:18

God's Answer: *"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**"* Luke 16:13 *"And every one that hath forsaken houses ... **or lands**, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."* Matt. 19:29

Excuse: Possessions *"Another said, I have **bought five yoke of oxen**, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused."* Luke 14:19

God's Answer: *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For **where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**."* Matt. 6:19-21 (Also Luke 12:20)

Excuse: Family *"And another said, I have **married a wife**, and therefore I cannot come."* Luke 14:20

God's Answer: *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."* Luke 14:26



Excuse: *"But if I make that reform, I will have trouble, affliction and persecution."*

God's Answer: *"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:27 "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48:10*

Excuse: *I don't have time, to do it Your way, God. I have to do what is most convenient.*

God's Answer: *"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34 "But **seek ye first the kingdom of God**, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33 "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, **Fear not; I will help thee.**" Isaiah 41:13*

Excuse: *"It's too hard! I can't do it."*

God's Answer: *"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" Gen. 18:14 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Php. 4:13*

Excuse: *"But, I'm so tired. I don't have the energy to make changes in my life..."*

God's Answer: *"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Prov. 24:10 "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Isaiah 40:29 "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for **my strength is made perfect in weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor. 12:9*

Excuse: *"But nobody else is doing it Your way, even other Christians."*

God's Answer: *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." 2 Cor. 10:12
 "... that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15*

Excuse: *"Why, if I follow God's way on that, I'll lose my job, and we'll starve to death."*

God's Answer: *"But **my God shall supply all your need** according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Php. 4:19 "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Psalm 37:25*

Excuse: *"I've done too many bad things, God can't forgive me."*

God's Answer: *[Jesus said] "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:6, 8 (Also 1 John 1:9)*

Kids' Corner

God's Amazing Creatures

Carpenter ants work very hard. They build nests inside wood. The carpenter ants hollow out the inside of trees, and will also hollow out houses and other buildings. Sawdust-like wood fibers are usually seen around their nest. They mainly eat other dead insects, but they also eat, honey, syrup, other juices, and nectar. When the worker ants find a dead insect, they will, most of the time, extract the fluid (bug juice) out of the insect and carry it back to the nest, even if it is bigger than them. People sometimes make excuses by saying that they're too tired or busy to work, but the carpenter ant never does. It just keeps working and working.



The Bible says: *"Go to the ant, thou sluggard [lazy person]; consider her ways, and be wise:" Prov. 6:6*

"I can
do all things
through
Christ which
strengtheneth
me."

Philippians 4:13



Patience's family had just had company, and Patience had a giant stack of dishes to wash. She thought it would take her a long time to get finished. But Patience didn't make excuses and complain that there were too many dishes for a little girl. Instead, as she washed dishes, she sang, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Patience made Jesus happy, and the dishes got cleaner too.



Passion's family had company coming to visit and Passion's room was a giant mess. She thought it would take her a long time to get finished cleaning. Passion made excuses, pouted, and complained that the job was too big for a little girl. Passion made Jesus sad, and she was sad too, especially when she missed her favorite bedtime story because her room wasn't clean yet. Passion wished she had just cleaned her room quickly.



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