

# What Good Is God?

✘ Philip Yancey | Faith Words

At least once in our lives, most of us are likely to wonder if our faith really matters—or we even ask, “What good is God?” Best-selling author Philip Yancey is no exception. To answer the question, he visited 10 places where devastating circumstances should have erased all traces of faith—but didn’t. From Mumbai, India, and its poverty to Virginia Tech after the massacre on April 16, 2007, to a conference attended by reformed prostitutes, Yancey saw proof that faith really does matter even when it’s put to the test.

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## Feedback October 2010

### CALLING ALL SKEPTICS

I was very pleased to see Craig Keener’s article “He Still Heals” in the August issue. Keener, a New Testament scholar, is very much a man of the Word. The article showed that he is also a man who believes in the reality and power of the Holy Spirit. The fact that someone with such high academic credentials affirms the reality of miracles may cause people who are skeptical of the miraculous to give the subject some serious consideration.

*John Lathrop,  
Waltham, Mass.*

## ENJOYING THE HOLY SPIRIT

I am enjoying so much your August issue on the Holy Spirit. I go back again and again and read the articles, including your Editor's Note—it's refreshing and sincere. I think it was a miracle concerning Steve Strang and *Charisma*. God blessed and is still blessing this extraordinary magazine. I am 80-plus years old. I pray the young people enjoy this magazine also.

*Connie Belcher,  
Cleveland, Tenn.*

## TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK

I take issue with Rachel Burchfield's answer to the question, "Can I be Spirit-filled and not speak in tongues?" in her article "Baptism 2.0 Basics" (August). She answers, "Yes, I believe they are Spirit-filled—just not Spirit-full." Where in Scripture is this distinction of a "Spirit-filled" and "Spirit-full" Christian? What about those who prophesy but don't speak in tongues? In Scripture, prophesying is referred to as the greater gift (see 1 Cor. 14:5). I guess they are only 51 percent full. As 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 asks: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?"

*Charles Wale,  
Carriere, Miss.*

Reading Rachel Burchfield's article in the August issue was eye-opening and a blessing for me. I have been able to speak in tongues since I was a child, but never knew why I had this ability. I thought it was the Holy Spirit, but I was not sure. After reading your article I put some of it into practice, like praying in tongues to help me go to sleep. I've always talked in tongues when I get tired from working hard. It just comes out naturally.

*Gary Cooper,  
Fort Ashby, .*

## **EVIDENCE OF THE GIFT (AND GIVER)**

“Tongues is the greatest gift that Jesus could give the church,” states Mr. Hamon (“Evidence of the Gift” by Bill Hamon, August). The apostle Paul declares: “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.” He concludes: “But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1 Cor. 13:4-5, 19; NIV).

While Mr. Hamon’s article affirms the benefits of a personal prayer language, I believe a more accurate statement is, “The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift that Jesus could give the church.” After all, that is the gift Jesus instructed His followers to wait for. Without the Holy Spirit there would be no lesser gifts.

*Carl Crooks,  
Monrovia, Calif.*

## **SUICIDE SAVES LIVES?**

I am writing regarding the Inspire article “A Suicide Saves Lives” (August). I have struggled with suicidal tendencies, self-mutilation and severe depression for more than 20 years. If someone read this article during a low point, it might seem easy to get out of the pain.

Coming from an emotional and depressed individual, I could hear the following: “The pain is so great, and God will save me. I will end it now and be in paradise for eternity.”

Who *wouldn't* do it if they had gone through 20-plus years of severe depression, abuse, etc., and knew that there was a quick and easy way to be with their Savior in paradise today and away from the pain here?

I am happy that Mark Canfora Sr. was able to receive peace from what the Lord spoke to him. I just have a passion to help those struggling with the kind of pain that leads to suicidal thoughts and actions. Telling someone that you can kill yourself and go to heaven is not an encouragement to remain alive and surrender to the Lord.

*K.M. Kersey,  
via e-mail*

### **DELIVERANCE (NOT THE MOVIE)**

Thank you for publishing the article "Help! I Think I'm Possessed!" (by Ron Phillips, July). Jesus Christ came to preach the gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons. If Christianity leaves out deliverance, it is leaving out one-third of Christ's ministry. It's easy to see why some Christians are having problems in this area.

*Gene Moody,  
Baton Rouge, La.*

### **HEARTS FOR RADICAL CHANGE**

The article by David Platt ("Calling All Radicals"; June) really broke my heart. While all our churches are preaching, "Get your Mercedes-Benz and your new house and your fine clothes," people in other countries are heartbroken because their brothers and sisters are having their tongues cut out. I hate to see what is going to have to come upon America to break us of all this false teaching, but it is not going to be pretty.

*Renae Madden,*

*via Facebook*

Thank you for the article by David Platt. I find myself growing dissatisfied with people who care more for their personal needs than for those of others. We all must care for ourselves, but we must also look to this world and take the gospel to it in thought, word and deed.

*Debbie Jean Dodson,  
via Facebook*

**'WITH THIS RING,' I DO DISAGREE**

To Claire Henderson's comment on the article "With This Ring ... I Give to the Poor" (Feedback, August), I would suggest that she doesn't understand the true meaning of sacrifice. Sacrifice is giving unselfishly for the benefit of others. Not everyone is willing to go to that length for a God who gave us everything.

*Tracey Rhodes,  
via e-mail*

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**CORRECTION:** *Our September article "A Professor With Spirit" incorrectly reported that Seattle Pacific University is an Assemblies of God school. It is affiliated with the Free Methodist Church.*

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# Charisma Online October 2010

## Look Ma, No Zoom!



So we've gone and done it again. We've completely revamped our digital magazine and made it something to write home about. (At least that's what users are saying.) In addition to featuring articles from our print version, exclusive digital-only features, videos, podcasts and photo galleries, *Charisma's* digital edition has been redesigned to make it an easier read on your desktop. You no longer need to zoom in and out. Just click to open and enjoy. Go to [here](#) to start exploring.



## The Younger Face of Politics

Young adult Christians approach church and politics in a different manner than their parents. Go to [here](#) to find out how the mosaic generation is changing the political landscape.

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## Live Chat With Samuel Rodriguez

Are you confused by the many arguments surrounding America's immigration debate? Then join Samuel Rodriguez, one of the nation's leading voices on the issue, on Oct. 5 at 9 p.m. (EST) to ask questions and listen to an in-depth discussion on this controversial subject. You can register and submit your questions by going to .

### **Be a Follower ... on Twitter**


Come on, everyone's doing it. Follow *Charisma* on Twitter and be one of the first to receive frequently updated news, teachings and other articles from us. Follow *Charisma* at .

### **It's Heating Up on Facebook**

Our Facebook page is rapidly growing as our conversations get more intense. Become a fan at and join the community living in the Spirit.

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## **Hot Sauce for Haiti**

You probably never thought you could help rebuild the  earthquake-torn nation of Haiti by purchasing hot sauce.

Think again.

Churches and other nonprofit organizations are helping to improve Haiti's economy by purchasing a Haitian-grown pepper sauce called Haiti Is Hot! The Haitian-American-owned company Bel Soley sells the sauce to churches and organizations that

commit to using some of the resale profits to aid Haitian families in need.

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## Outta Space Love



*Group 1 Crew | Fervent Records*

The award-winning trio Group 1 Crew return with more of their urban, hip-hop grooves. Their third album, *Outta Space Love*, includes tracks from their summer EP, *Spacebound*. Already a mainstream staple, the band feels called to write songs for the general market. That doesn't mean they're changing their message; they're simply packaging it so people can receive it more easily.

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## Mosaic



*Ricky Skaggs | Skaggs Family Records*

What do you get when you mix mandolin, banjo, acoustic guitar and violin and mix them with percussion, a hammered dulcimer, a string section, bagpipes, a bouzouki, electric guitar, keyboards, slide guitar and more? That would be Ricky Skaggs' new inspirational album, appropriately titled *Mosaic*. The 14-time Grammy winner offers a collection of 14 songs that speak of his faith through "music that is in my head and in my

heart,” the artist says.

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## What to Wear Today?

This month's bible study | ***Read Ephesians 6:10-20***

*As Christians, we need to select our clothes from God's wardrobe*

In the conclusion of his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul wrote: “A final word: Be strong in the Lord. ... Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil” (Eph. 6:10-11, NLT). How often do you feel “strong in the Lord”? Many Christians more frequently feel “small and puny” or “frail and afraid.”

The good thing is, Paul wasn't telling the Ephesian believers (or us) that through self-effort we could just *be* strong—he wasn't saying, “Just do it!” as the Nike commercial says. He goes on in verses 13-18 to explain that being strong in the Lord requires getting suited up for battle. Spiritually speaking, he compares it to dressing like the professional soldiers in his day.

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# Chatting with Michael W. Smith

*For 27 years Michael W. Smith has shared his music with the world. Yet the CCM legend calls his 22nd album, Wonder, his most personal to date. He talked to Charisma the project, what he's learned over the years and what life is like as a grandfather.*

***What was the inspiration for Wonder?***


**Michael W. Smith:** I think all these songs are about what I've been going through just living life. Everything from "Save Me From Myself"—obviously I wake up every day and say: "Gosh, I'm a mess, God. I need You. Save me from myself"—to "Take My Breath Away." There are some tough songs. "I'll Wait for You" is about how life is hard, but those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength and mount up with wings as eagles. That's one of my favorites. "Leave" is another one. No one wants to write about abuse, but it needs to be discussed and talked about. I couldn't be happier with the record. It's been a great journey.

***How is this album different?***

**Smith:** Sonically I think it's the best thing I've ever done. We cut everything to tape which gives the big warmth, the fatness, whether it's the bass, vocals or drums. It's really completely different than recording digital. I wrote 75 songs. How do you narrow it down to 12? That's always a difficult endeavor, but I think we picked the best 12.

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# Refined by Pain


*Tragedy made Heather Williams' faith take a dramatic turn—for the better* 

When people hear that Heather Williams leads worship with her husband, Tim, it could be easy to assume that she has lived an idyllic life. But that couldn't be further from the truth.

Williams grew up going to church with her mother and stepfather, but the family was broken. She experienced complete abuse and oppression and wanted nothing to do with God.

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# Sharing a Recipe for Life

Chef Brett Swayn believes that teaching the homeless to  cook can save their lives.

Swayn says this was his experience after his marriage collapsed and his music career fell apart, causing him to live four months in a homeless shelter before he found work. He later emerged from his despair and learned a new trade in culinary arts.