

Examining the Evidence

"Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks the reason for the hope you have." 1 Peter 3:15

REACHING YOUR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN CHRIST – Part 2

by Bill Rudge

With so many religious and philosophical options to choose from, why are you a Christian? Is it because you're convinced that Jesus Christ is who He claims to be and that the Bible is the unique revelation of God?

1 Peter 3:15 encourages us:

Always be prepared to give an answer [make a defense] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

The Quest

I shared Christ with a young man to whom I was giving a ride. He said, "Bill, don't waste your time. I don't believe in Jesus Christ, and I don't believe in the Bible." I responded, "That's fine Dan. You have a right to believe whatever you want, but don't be so foolish as to reject the Bible and Jesus Christ without first examining the overwhelming evidence."

I then shared with him some of the archaeological discoveries that have established the historical accuracy of innumerable biblical details, as well as the scientific evidence, and the accuracy and superiority of biblical health and nutrition principles. I shared some of the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) that had been made at least 400 years before Christ walked on earth, explaining the mathematical impossibility for anyone to fulfill just a few of these prophecies, yet Jesus fulfilled them all. I explained to him how the evidence of the resurrection is undeniable and asked him what other religious leader has an empty tomb.

I asked Dan to consider the numerous biblical prophecies written almost 2,000 years ago concerning the end times in which we are now living – prophecies foretelling a one-world government, a one-world monetary system, and a one-world religion. The specific details and exactness of these and many other prophecies that are being fulfilled right before our eyes would have been impossible to foretell without divine inspiration.

Finally, I shared the reality of

Jesus Christ through the tremendous way in which He has transformed my life and millions of others throughout history, as well as the miraculous interventions the Lord has done in my life and ministry. These evidences and many more are the reasons why I gave my life to Christ.

The Three Questions

I didn't believe in Jesus Christ and become a Christian out of random chance or haphazard choice. Initially, there was an intentional bias on my part and a deliberate rejection of Him due to lifestyle choices, ulterior motives, or being unable to resolve the conflict of a loving God with the suffering and death I was witnessing.

Lasting fulfillment always eluded me despite all my searching which either proved insufficient or led to a dead end. My restless heart and relentless quest for truth and purpose forced me to honestly consider three crucial questions:

1) Is there a God? If there isn't, then I can live any way I want. However, my search and research convinced me there is a Creator.

2) If there is a God, are there many ways or only one way to this Supernatural Being? After examining the evidence I was convinced there is only one way to God – through Jesus

Christ.

3) How do I come to know God and what does He require of me? My spiritual journey proved fruitful. I could not deny the truth. At age 18 I became an ardent believer in and follower of Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. God's Spirit began to transform my life as I spent time in Scripture, prayer, and fasting and started living by the biblical principles I will be sharing in upcoming newsletters.

I have grown in my faith over the years and my continuing investigation and research confirms the wisdom of committing my life to Jesus Christ. There is only One before Whom I willingly bend my knee and bow. To Him alone do I entrust my life, my future, and my eternal destiny!

Excerpted from Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ (which is being updated and expanded for its third printed edition and E-book)

There is only One before Whom I willingly bend my knee and entrust my life, future, and eternal destiny.

How Strong Is Your Faith?

Kayla Mueller's Life and Martyrdom

by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.

Writing to Christians who were facing persecution, the Apostle Peter reminded them that trials prove the genuineness of their faith:

These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold--and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:7).

The truth of this verse was evident throughout Kayla Mueller's life. Kayla was an American humanitarian aid worker who, in August of 2013, was taken captive by ISIS while in Syria. Until her reported death in February 2015, Kayla endured torture, verbal abuse, forced slave labor, and repeated raping by ISIS' top leader. Despite these unimaginable trials, Kayla never wavered in her faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, reports by other hostages who escaped or were released by ISIS, document how she remained strong in her faith. As reported by ABC News:

... her fellow hostages say she never surrendered hope, she selflessly put the welfare of fellow captives above her own and she even stood up to executioner 'Jihadi John' to defend her Christian faith.

Kayla's steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ should be a challenge to determine the strength of our own faith. We may not have to suffer as she did, but when the trials of life do come our way, we can have that same strength she had to stand up and proclaim the name of Jesus Christ.

The book of Hebrews reminds us that a great cloud of witnesses surround us (Hebrews 12:1). Now, one of those witnesses is Kayla Mueller. Her race is over and she is now in the presence of her Lord and Savior. But our race is still going on. The question before us is, "What witness will we leave when our race ends?" I pray that, like Kayla, we will encourage other believers to stand strong in their faith.

Kayla's Mother Responds to BJ's Blog

Dear Dr. BJ Rudge,

We thank you for keeping Kayla's memory alive and I will keep your letter with Kayla's things. Kayla's letters showed us her continued love for God and her determination to never give up, no matter what happened to her. They helped keep us strong during her 18 months of captivity and now keep us just as strong to continue on.

Your beautiful words in your blog brought tears to my eyes but also filled my heart with joy. Please keep writing, I do not want the world to forget my Kayla and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help! We miss her, our hearts ache without her and yet we feel deep within our hearts and minds her presence, her joy for life, her God given gift to make this world better through a just peace for all and she did what she could with her own hands and a heart to just help. She lives on thanks to our Lord. He has given us the strength and courage to go on, to honor who she was by continuing to tell her story and to do our best to live as she did with love, joy, peace and hope, wanting true justice for all.

With respect, Marsha Mueller, Kayla's mom

Praise the Lord

by Karen Rudge

Two weeks before leaving for our Israel trip I was in a lot of pain and had the flu which went into bronchitis. I had a lot of ministry work to do before leaving and was praying I would be able to go. Many people were also praying for me. The Lord spoke to my heart to listen to praise music and praise Him.

It is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. (Psalm 147:1)

When I felt the most pain or sickness I would leave my office and go listen to praise music, pray and praise the Lord. The pain would lessen and I had enough energy to finish the work needed for that day. Praise the Lord! I was able to go to Israel with virtually no pain or sickness.

J. C. Penney was a business man who lost everything in the 1930's to the Great Depression. He became ill and sank to such a low depression that he was admitted to the hospital. He felt he was going to die. Then one morning he heard singing coming from the hospital chapel. As he listened the words began to sink into his soul:

**Be not dismayed whatever betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.**

Instantly the darkness left him and he said there was a warm and brilliant sunlight. It was then he became a born again Christian. From that day on he never worried. He said the 20 minutes of the chapel songs were so glorious it changed his life. When he died at age 99 he left 1660 department stores in his name.

Praising the Lord can lift anyone out of a deep sorrow, sickness or anxiety:

Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. (Psalm 149:3-5)

Miracle Child (Lillian Grace)

by Tabitha Rudge Smith (and Florence Biros)

My husband and I were living in California and always wanted a big family. When we learned a third child was going to join us, we were so thrilled. I called the doctor and was told, “We would like to see you around 10 to 12 weeks in the pregnancy unless you have complications.”

I made my appointment to see the doctor for the first time, when I knew I would be able to hear my baby’s heartbeat. Besides, my morning sickness was so bad with this pregnancy that I couldn’t wait to see the doctor to get something to help alleviate it.

At the appointment, I saw a female doctor who tried to hear the heartbeat, but couldn’t find it. “Sometimes this early – around 10 weeks – the heartbeat is hard to hear. Instead, we’re going to do an ultrasound.”

How exciting, I thought, I can see my baby as well as hear it! That didn’t happen. When they did the ultrasound, the woman looked very solemn and said, “I’m very sorry. There is a pregnancy sac but it is empty.” Then she added, “There are no signs of life.”

I answered, “Well it is early and I could be off a few days.”

She looked at me and declared, “Well you’d have to be off at least 3 weeks.”

In my heart I knew I was not 3 weeks off of my cycle. Her next words cut me to the core, “Why don’t you go home and think about what you want to do – miscarry on your own or have a D&C?”

That weekend I had planned on going on a woman’s retreat. I didn’t feel like going. My husband suggested, “Why don’t you go to help keep your mind off all this?”

I went. By the second night of the retreat, I was so miserable from throwing up and crying that I had to leave during the evening message and run to the restroom.

A sweet, elderly lady asked sympathetically, “Do you have the flu?”

Do I tell her? I contemplated for a minute, then decided I didn’t feel like discussing it. Instead I told her, “I’m pregnant and having a terrible time with morning sickness.”

Taking my hand, she asked “May I pray for you?”

I just need to tell her that there is no baby. Why pray? I agreed, though. She continued to hold my hand and pray, asking God to take away my nausea, bless my pregnancy and then she placed her hand on my womb and said, “Lord, if there is something that needs to be in the womb that is not there, we ask you to place it there.”

At that moment I burst into tears and told her the whole story. She simply smiled, gave me a hug, then walked away.

A few days later I went to see the doctor who said, “I’ll schedule one more ultrasound before scheduling your D&C.” When she placed the ultrasound wand on my stomach, she seemed amazed. She not only heard the heartbeat, but saw a picture of our 11 week old baby in my belly.

We knew that God had performed a miracle and gave us our precious baby. She is now a beautiful, healthy 14-year-old who loves to tell her friends about Jesus.



Lily (second from left) with her parents, brother, sisters and foreign exchange student living with them.

Sweet 14

Happy Birthday to our sweet Lily Bird! I still remember the day the doctor told us we should abort you. Now, 14 years later, every year we have with you continues to be a gift from God. From the moment you were born, you always did things your way. You are strong, fearless, and take challenges in life head on. You are strong because you know where your strength lies. You don’t back down to any challenge in life because you know Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ.” You are always defending others and your love for rescuing every animal melts our hearts. Keep living this life God gave you for Him. Your dad and I will spend another day thanking God you are alive. Life is a precious gift. Happy Birthday Lily.

Love mom and dad.

Special Needs at BRM

- American Flags (3’ x 5’ or 4’ x 6’)
- Chairs – Stacking or Folding Padded Chairs
- Dehumidifiers
- Fans
- Generator
- Painter for inside walls and ceiling
- Portable Heaters
- Plumber for minor repairs at ministry
- Vehicle
- We always need additional financial supporters and prayer intercessors for this growing, multi-faceted ministry.

Kid's Corner

• A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

• A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

• A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say, the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

contributed by Diana Trepesowsky (California)

A Mother's Love

*As children we can't comprehend
or fully realize,
The meaning of a mother's love,
how tender and how wise,
Her patience and her guidance,
her helpful, caring ways,
The special, thoughtful things she does,
to brighten up our days.
Years go by before we know
the depth of her concern,
The love in her protectiveness...
it takes so long to learn.
But as we grow, we understand,
for we look back and see,
Through older eyes and wiser hearts,
her love and loyalty.
It's these and many other things
that make her grow more dear,
More admired and more appreciated
with every passing year.*

Author Unknown

**Kids don't
care how
much you
know until
they know
how much
you care.**

In Memory Of

Guy BonGiovanni

by Gert Wooten

Joseph Michael Golub

by William Golub

Ray Ischo

by Ruth Ischo

Bob Miller

by Gert Wooten

Robert E. Rudge Sr.

by Jeanne M Foley

Sandra L McMahon

Obstacle Course

The popular **Ultimate Challenge Obstacle & Fitness Course** at BRM is open for groups and individuals from May 15 - October 15. There is no fee but you must schedule in advance so Bill or BJ can coordinate a specialized event for you and your group. Bill and BJ's summer and fall are very busy with family and ministry activities so be sure to schedule your group as soon as possible.



Many of our ministry friends have faithfully supported BRM until their dying days. What a legacy of faith, love, commitment and sacrifice they have left and what an inheritance they have gained.

We greatly appreciate those who are so faithful with their support month after month. Also, your special occasional gifts, assistance with special projects, prayer support and encouraging notes are such a blessing. May the Lord reward your kindness and generosity a hundredfold!

Bill and Karen

BILL RUDGE MINISTRIES

BRM is a growing international outreach dedicated to sharing the Gospel with a searching world and challenging believers to reach their maximum potential – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Our mission is to share a living Savior with a dying world and motivate believers to be Biblical Christians – walking in faithfulness to Jesus Christ and His Word until He returns.

Our Board of Directors, Board of Reference, thirty-plus staff and volunteers, and hundreds of supporters and prayer intercessors are the backbone and heart of this ministry.

BRM is a multi-faceted ministry touching the lives of young people and adults across the United States and around the world through:

- Books, e-books, pamphlets, tracts, audio and video messages
- Chaplain ministry and crisis intervention
- Leadership training
- Military and prison ministries
- Missionary outreaches
- Newsletters, web site, blogs, tweets and podcasts
- Obstacle course, soccer and sports ministry
- Prayer and correspondence ministry
- Radio broadcasts, interviews and minute messages
- Research and apologetics
- School assemblies
- Speaking engagements
- Total health and fitness and self-defense
- Witness encounters and street ministry
- World literature outreach

BRM is a 501(c)(3) religious and educational non-profit organization with 40 years of effectiveness, integrity, and maximizing funds. Your prayer and financial support enables this ministry to continue reaching out to thousands of young people and adults on a local, national, and worldwide level (Acts 1:8).

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