

THINK ABOVE THE BOX
Bible Study Guide for
Time Enough at Last*
By Lyn Venable



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.



The atomic bomb meant, to most people, the end. To Henry Bemis it meant something far different—a thing to appreciate and enjoy.

Time Enough At Last

For a long time, Henry Bemis had had an ambition. To read a book. Not just the title or the preface, or a page somewhere in the middle. He wanted to read the whole thing, all the way through from beginning to end. A simple ambition perhaps, but in the cluttered life of Henry Bemis, an impossibility.

Henry had no time of his own. There was his wife, Agnes who owned that part of it that his employer, Mr. Carsville, did not buy. Henry was allowed enough to get to and from work—that in itself being quite a concession on Agnes' part.

Also, nature had conspired against Henry by handing him a pair of hopelessly myopic [nearsighted] eyes. Poor Henry literally couldn't see his hand in front of his face. For a while, when he was very young, his parents had thought him an idiot. When they realized it was his eyes, they got glasses for him. He was never quite able to catch up. There was never enough time. It looked as though Henry's ambition would never be realized. Then something happened which changed all that.

Henry was down in the vault of the Eastside Bank & Trust when it happened. He had stolen a few moments from the duties of his teller's cage to try to read a few pages of the magazine he had bought that morning. He'd made an excuse to Mr. Carsville about needing bills in large denominations for a certain customer, and then, safe inside the dim recesses of the vault he had pulled from inside his coat the pocket size magazine.

He had just started a picture article cheerfully entitled "The New Weapons and What They'll Do To YOU", when all the noise in the world crashed in upon his ear-drums. It seemed to be inside of him and outside of him all at once. Then the concrete floor was rising up at him and the ceiling came slanting down toward him, and for a fleeting second Henry thought of a story he had started to read once called "The Pit and The Pendulum". He regretted in that insane moment that he had never had time to finish that story to see how it came out. Then all was darkness and quiet and unconsciousness.

When Henry came to, he knew that something was desperately wrong with the Eastside Bank & Trust. The heavy steel door of the vault was buckled and twisted and the floor tilted up at a dizzy angle, while the ceiling dipped crazily toward it. Henry gingerly got to his feet, moving arms and legs experimentally. Assured that nothing was broken, he tenderly raised a hand to his eyes. His precious glasses were intact, thank God! He would never have been able to find his way out of the shattered vault without them.

He made a mental note to write to Dr. Torrance to have a spare pair made and mailed to him. Blasted nuisance not having his prescription on file locally, but Henry trusted no-one but Dr. Torrance to grind those thick lenses into his own complicated prescription. Henry removed the heavy glasses from his face. Instantly the room dissolved into a neutral blur. Henry saw a pink splash that he knew was his hand, and a white blob come up to meet the pink as he withdrew his pocket handkerchief and carefully dusted the lenses. As he replaced the glasses, they slipped down on the bridge of his nose a little. He had been meaning to have them tightened for some time.

He suddenly realized, without the realization actually entering his conscious thoughts, that something momentous had happened, something worse than the boiler blowing up, something worse than a gas main

exploding, something worse than anything that had ever happened before. He felt that way because it was so quiet. There was no whine of sirens, no shouting, no running, just an ominous and all pervading silence.

Henry walked across the slanting floor. Slipping and stumbling on the uneven surface, he made his way to the elevator. The car lay crumpled at the foot of the shaft like a discarded accordion. There was something inside of it that Henry could not look at, something that had once been a person, or perhaps several people, it was impossible to tell now.

Feeling sick, Henry staggered toward the stairway. The steps were still there, but so jumbled and piled back upon one another that it was more like climbing the side of a mountain than mounting a stairway. It was quiet in the huge chamber that had been the lobby of the bank. It looked strangely cheerful with the sunlight shining through the girders where the ceiling had fallen. The dappled sunlight glinted across the silent lobby, and everywhere there were huddled lumps of unpleasantness that made Henry sick as he tried not to look at them.

"Mr. Carsville," he called. It was very quiet. Something had to be done, of course. This was terrible, right in the middle of a Monday, too. Mr. Carsville would know what to do. He called again, more loudly, and his voice cracked hoarsely, "Mr. Carrrrsville!" And then he saw an arm and shoulder extending out from under a huge fallen block of marble ceiling. In the buttonhole was the white carnation Mr. Carsville had worn to work that morning, and on the third finger of that hand was a massive signet ring, also belonging to Mr. Carsville. Numbly, Henry realized that the rest of Mr. Carsville was under that block of marble.

Henry felt a pang of real sorrow. Mr. Carsville was gone, and so was the rest of the staff—Mr. Wilkinson and Mr. Emory and Mr. Prithard, and the same with Pete and Ralph and Jenkins and Hunter and Pat the guard and Willie the doorman. There was no one to say what was to be done about the Eastside Bank & Trust except Henry Bemis, and Henry wasn't worried about the bank, there was something he wanted to do.

He climbed carefully over piles of fallen masonry. Once he stepped down into something that crunched and squashed beneath his feet and he set his teeth on edge to keep from retching. The street was not much different from the inside, bright sunlight and so much concrete to crawl over, but the unpleasantness was much, much worse. Everywhere there were strange, motionless lumps that Henry could not look at.

Suddenly, he remembered Agnes. He should be trying to get to Agnes, shouldn't he? He remembered a poster he had seen that said, "In event of emergency do not use the telephone, your loved ones are as safe as you." He wondered about Agnes. He looked at the smashed automobiles, some with their four wheels pointing skyward like the stiffened legs of dead animals. He couldn't get to Agnes now anyway, if she was safe, then, she was safe, otherwise ... of course, Henry knew Agnes wasn't safe. He had a feeling that there wasn't anyone safe for a long, long way, maybe not in the whole state or the whole country, or the whole world. No, that was a thought Henry didn't want to think, he forced it from his mind and turned his thoughts back to Agnes.

She had been a pretty good wife, now that it was all said and done. It wasn't exactly her fault if people didn't have time to read nowadays. It was just that there was the house, and the bank, and the yard. There were the Jones' for bridge and the Graysons' for canasta and charades with the Bryants. And the television, the television Agnes loved to watch, but would never watch alone. He never had time to read even a newspaper. He started thinking about last night, that business about the newspaper.

Henry had settled into his chair, quietly, afraid that a creaking spring might call to Agnes' attention the fact that he was momentarily unoccupied. He had unfolded the newspaper slowly and carefully, the sharp crackle of the paper would have been a clarion call to Agnes. He had glanced at the headlines of the first page. "Collapse Of Conference Imminent." He didn't have time to read the article. He turned to the second page. "Solon Predicts

War Only Days Away." He flipped through the pages faster, reading brief snatches here and there, afraid to spend too much time on any one item. On a back page was a brief article entitled, "Prehistoric Artifacts Unearthed In Yucatan". Henry smiled to himself and carefully folded the sheet of paper into fourths. That would be interesting, he would read all of it. Then it came, Agnes' voice. "Henrrreee!" And then she was upon him. She lightly flicked the paper out of his hands and into the fireplace. He saw the flames lick up and curl possessively around the unread article. Agnes continued, "Henry, tonight is the Jones' bridge night. They'll be here in thirty minutes and I'm not dressed yet, and here you are ... *reading*." She had emphasized the last word as though it were an unclean act. "Hurry and shave, you know how smooth Jasper Jones' chin always looks, and then straighten up this room." She glanced regretfully toward the fireplace. "Oh dear, that paper, the television schedule ... oh well, after the Jones leave there won't be time for anything but the late-late movie and.... Don't just sit there, Henry, hurrreeee!"

Henry was hurrying now, but hurrying too much. He cut his leg on a twisted piece of metal that had once been an automobile fender. He thought about things like lock-jaw and gangrene and his hand trembled as he tied his pocket-handkerchief around the wound. In his mind, he saw the fire again, licking across the face of last night's newspaper. He thought that now he would have time to read all the newspapers he wanted to, only now there wouldn't be any more. That heap of rubble across the street had been the Gazette Building. It was terrible to think there would never be another up to date newspaper. Agnes would have been very upset, no television schedule. But then, of course, no television. He wanted to laugh but he didn't. That wouldn't have been fitting, not at all.

He could see the building he was looking for now, but the silhouette was strangely changed. The great circular dome was now a ragged semi-circle, half of it gone, and one of the great wings of the building had fallen in upon itself. A sudden panic gripped Henry Bemis. What if they were all ruined, destroyed, every one of them? What if there wasn't a single one left? Tears of helplessness welled in his eyes as he painfully fought his way over and through the twisted fragments of the city.

He thought of the building when it had been whole. He remembered the many nights he had paused outside its wide and welcoming doors. He thought of the warm nights when the doors had been thrown open and he could see the people inside, see them sitting at the plain wooden tables with the stacks of books beside them. He used to think then, what a wonderful thing a public library was, a place where anybody, anybody at all could go in and read.

He had been tempted to enter many times. He had watched the people through the open doors, the man in greasy work clothes who sat near the door, night after night, laboriously studying, a technical journal perhaps, difficult for him, but promising a brighter future. There had been an aged, scholarly gentleman who sat on the other side of the door, leisurely paging, moving his lips a little as he did so, a man having little time left, but rich in time because he could do with it as he chose.

Henry had never gone in. He had started up the steps once, got almost to the door, but then he remembered Agnes, her questions and shouting, and he had turned away.

He was going in now though, almost crawling, his breath coming in stabbing gasps, his hands torn and bleeding. His trouser leg was sticky red where the wound in his leg had soaked through the handkerchief. It was throbbing badly but Henry didn't care. He had reached his destination.

Part of the inscription was still there, over the now doorless entrance. P-U-B—C L-I-B-R—. The rest had been torn away. The place was in shambles. The shelves were overturned, broken, smashed, tilted, their precious contents spilled in disorder upon the floor. A lot of the books, Henry noted gleefully, were still intact, still whole,

still readable. He was literally knee deep in them, he wallowed in books. He picked one up. The title was "Collected Works of William Shakespeare." Yes, he must read that, sometime. He laid it aside carefully. He picked up another. Spinoza. He tossed it away, seized another, and another, and still another. Which to read first ... there were so many.

He had been conducting himself a little like a starving man in a delicatessen—grabbing a little of this and a little of that in a frenzy of enjoyment.

But now he steadied away. From the pile about him, he selected one volume, sat comfortably down on an overturned shelf, and opened the book.

Henry Bemis smiled.

There was the rumble of complaining stone. Minute in comparison with the epic complaints following the fall of the bomb. This one occurred under one corner of the shelf upon which Henry sat. The shelf moved; threw him off balance. The glasses slipped from his nose and fell with a tinkle.

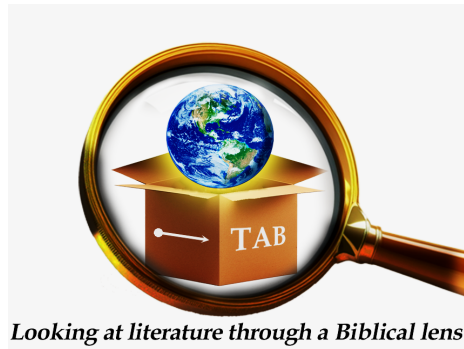
He bent down, clawing blindly and found, finally, their smashed remains. A minor, indirect destruction stemming from the sudden, wholesale smashing of a city. But the only one that greatly interested Henry Bemis.

He stared down at the blurred page before him.

He began to cry.

—THE END—

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Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

1. Today we have a treat for all you visual learners out there! Let's begin this study by watching the 1959 Twilight Zone television series' version of this story, which was featured in the year 1959. Just for fun, ask your grandparents if they remember watching this. I do and the storyline has always fascinated me! You can click the link below:

[Archive.org The Twilight Zone Season 1, Episode 8 Time Enough at Last](#)

"Witness Mr. Henry Bemis, a charter member in the fraternity of dreamers. A bookish little man whose passion is the printed page, but who is conspired against by a bank president and a wife and a world full of tongue-cluckers and the unrelenting hands of a clock. But in just a moment, Mr. Bemis will enter a world without bank presidents or wives or clocks or anything else. He'll have a world all to himself... without anyone."

- Rod Serling

"The worst part, the very worst part is being alone." But is that really true for Henry? Was he truly all alone?

Psalm 23:4 AMPC Yes, though I walk through the [deep, sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I will fear or dread no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort me.

Matthew 1:23 NLT "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

Deuteronomy 31:8 ERV The LORD will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid!



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: This teleplay added some scenes to the story that enrich the plot, such as Henry attempting suicide after he finds a pistol in the rubble of a sporting goods store, but then asks God for forgiveness. *"I'm sure I'll be forgiven for this. The way things are, I know I'll be forgiven."* Do you think God would have forgiven him if he hadn't thrown the gun down? Would the following verses apply?

Psalm 103:10-14 ESV He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

1 John 1:9 ESV If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

"If a person who has truly received Jesus Christ as Savior, thereby demonstrating that he/she has been redeemed, reconciled, forgiven, justified, etc., by God, commits suicide, the sin of suicide was covered by the blood of Christ. Now, we can question whether a true Christian could commit suicide, but, if a true Christian were to commit suicide, it would be forgiven."
- S. Michael Houdmann

What does the Bible say about suicide?

"Beautiful written lyrics..A song I would listen to daily after coming across it 1 year ago. Suffering serious health problems, and feeling suicidal daily. The word hope that the tomorrows will be better days...Don't give up, Just don't give up....."
- patrickreilly3721 [posted in Comments section of the link below]



Don't Give Up / Calling Glory

2. At its first printing in the magazine IF Worlds of Science Fiction, January 1953, they began with the following weird statement: *"The atomic bomb meant, to most people, the end. To Henry Bemis it meant something far different—a thing to appreciate and enjoy."* Wait, what?? Before we go any further, let's discuss what living in a newly nuclear armed world meant for people at the time. Again, your grandparents may remember air raid drills at school where the mere act of leaning on the wall in the school hallway and covering your eyes was supposed to save you from total radioactive annihilation! Understandably, there was a lot of fear and anxiety right after World War II. The following link gives us a rundown of what transpired, in order to set the stage for Harry's lunch hour adventure:

"If you were able, and that is a big "if," to get the governments of the world to eliminate all existing nuclear weapons, that would last only until one side began losing the next conventional war. At that point, the losing side would begin building nuclear weapons as soon as possible to save itself from defeat. That is the unpleasant, but true reality of human nature as it is, not necessarily as we would like it to be."
- Richard D. Land

The nuclear age turns 80

Romans 3:10-18 TLB As the Scriptures say, "No one is good—no one in all the world is innocent." No one has ever really followed God's paths or even truly wanted to. Every one has turned away; all have gone wrong. No one anywhere has kept on doing what is right; not one. Their talk is foul and filthy like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the sting and poison of deadly snakes. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. They are quick to kill, hating anyone who disagrees

with them. Wherever they go they leave misery and trouble behind them, and they have never known what it is to feel secure or enjoy God's blessing. They care nothing about God nor what he thinks of them.

But Lord, please tell us how You *really* feel! Is there any hope for us?

John 14:27 ESV "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

John 16:33 AMPC "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]"

"In a world filled with sin, hatred, and evil ([Romans 3:10–18](#)), war is unavoidable. In our modern, technologically advanced world, warfare includes the threat of WMDs. As Christians, we should not desire war ([Matthew 5:9](#)). At the same time, we must accept the fact that God has given our government authority to administer justice with "the sword" ([Romans 13:1](#); cf. [1 Peter 2:13](#)). Governments also bear the divinely ordained responsibility to protect their citizens. Sometimes administering justice and protecting against aggression even includes the manufacture and use of weapons of mass destruction."

- [Got Questions](#)

[How should Christians view weapons of mass destruction / nuclear weapons? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Are you ready for a little country-bluegrass-gospel song about nuclear annihilation? 'Cuz here it is!

"Do you fear this man's invention that they call atomic power? / Are we all in great confusion, do we know the time or hour? / When a terrible explosion may rain down upon our land, leaving horrible destruction, blotting out the works of man? / Are you ready for that great atomic power? / Will you rise and meet your Savior in the air? / Will you shout or will you cry when the fire rains from on high? / Are you ready for that great atomic power? / There is one way to escape it, be prepared to meet the Lord. / Give your heart and soul to Jesus, he will be your shielding sword. / He will surely stand beside you and you'll never taste of death, for your soul will fly to safety and eternal peace and rest... / There's an army who can conquer all the enemy's great band. / It's the regiment of Christians guided by the Savior's hand. / When the mushroom of destruction falls in all its fury great, God will surely save his children from that awful awful fate."

- [The Louvin Brothers](#)

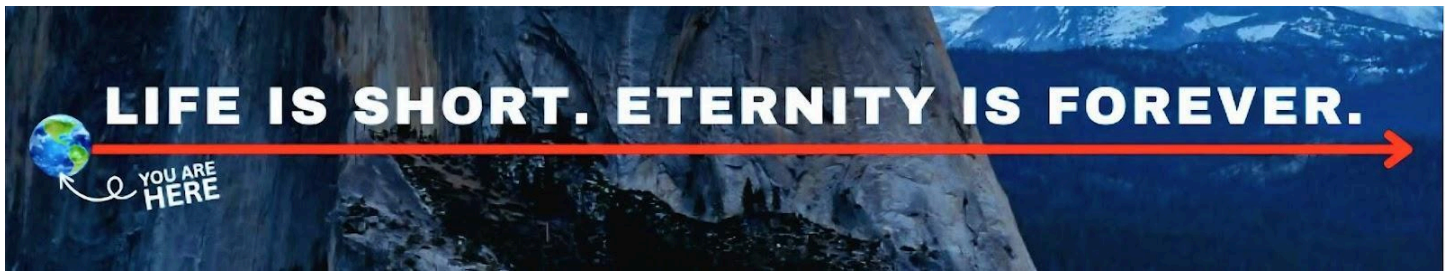


[The Great Atomic Power](#)



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: As in our logo below, life here on earth is short, and probably *very* short for poor Henry Bemis. With or without clear eyesight, the radiation of the blast would get to him in a matter of days if not hours. Hopefully he knew where he was headed!



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

John 3:16 NIV For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 TLB For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do *you* know where you're going?

3. Henry had one main desire in his life - to be able to read whatever book he wanted, from beginning to end, whenever he wanted, uninterrupted.

"... nature had conspired against Henry by handing him a pair of hopelessly myopic eyes. Poor Henry literally couldn't see his hand in front of his face. For a while, when he was very young, his parents had thought him an idiot. When they realized it was his eyes, they got glasses for him. He was never quite able to catch up. There was never enough time."

People can have vision problems and physical blindness, but sadly, many are *spiritually* blind.

2 Corinthians 4:4 They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

Matthew 13:13-16 GW "This is why I speak to them this way. They see, but they're blind. They hear, but they don't listen. They don't even try to understand. So they make Isaiah's prophecy come true: 'You will hear clearly but never understand. You will see clearly but never comprehend. These people have become close-minded and hard of hearing. They have shut their eyes so that their eyes never see. Their ears never hear. Their minds never understand. And they never return to me for healing!' [[Isaiah 6:9-10 NIV](#)] Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear."

"Spiritual blindness is a very serious condition that a person has when they are unable to "see" Jesus Christ (i.e., understand and believe in his teachings, his deity, his sacrifice, his saving message, etc.). And people who do not "see" Jesus Christ, do not "see" God ([Colossians 1:15-16 TLB](#)). Spiritually blind people do not believe in God, in Jesus Christ,

nor His Word ([Romans 2:8 GNT](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 ERV](#)). People who are spiritually blind do not accept, and therefore reject, Jesus Christ and are “lost” ([John 6:68-69 TLB](#)). In summary, those who do not believe and have not put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are spiritually blind ([John 9:35-41 NIV](#)).” - [Bible IQ](#)

[Spiritual Blindness | Bible IQ](#)

EXTRA CREDIT: “If you are curious about your own spiritual vision, please consider taking our various “Spiritual Growth Assessments” located on our SPIRITUAL EYE EXAM pages. These assessments are free, quick, and the results are immediate.” - [Bible IQ](#)

Click below and see how you score!

[Spiritual Vision - Spiritual Eyesight | SPIRITUAL EYE EXAM Center](#)

“I’m no scribe, I’m no priest, underqualified, so I won’t teach. / There’s so much I don’t know. It’s mostly a mystery. / All I can say is the things that You did for me. / All I say is the reason why I believe. / All I know is I was blind and now I see. / I was alone and You gave me a hand to hold. / I was depressed in the darkness and You led me home. / You got me through. / I surrendered to shame, let it cripple me. / Flooded with anxious thoughts and You brought me peace. / You got me through and it’s all I know. / It’s all I know. / Don’t be confused as to why He came. / A perfect act of grace, He came here to save sinners of whom I’m the worst, if he redeemed my sins, I know He can redeem yours... / I don’t wanna have religious debates. / There’s too much I can never explain. / All I know is I met grace. / On that day everything changed. / It’s all I know / ... / Only amazing kindness so sweet, can save a wretch like me. / I was lost and now I’m found. / I was blind and now I see. / ... And it’s all I know.” - Seth Addison



[▶ All I Know/ Seth Addison](#)

4. “She had been a pretty good wife, now that it was all said and done. It wasn’t exactly her fault if people didn’t have time to read nowadays. It was just that there was the house, and the bank, and the yard. There were the Jones’ for bridge and the Graysons’ for canasta and charades with the Bryants. And the television, the television Agnes loved to watch, but would never watch alone. He never had time to read even a newspaper.”

Agne’s schedule for Henry is the perfect symbol of all that we let eat up our days in busyness, only now we can add our cellphones, laptops, tablets, computers, social media, video games, smart watches and non-stop streaming of endless shows! How can we find time to think about God?

Ephesian 5:15-16 AMP Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil.

Psalms 90:12 TLB Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should.

James 4:13-15 ERV Some of you say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to some city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money.” Listen, think about this: You don’t know what will happen tomorrow. Your life is like a fog. You can see it for a short time, but then it goes away. So you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.”

“We have to look at our lives as a window of opportunity, because none of us has unlimited time. Everyone, no matter who they are, has 168 hours a week, and we’re supposed to spend about a third of it sleeping, and then another large amount of that likely goes to work. But in terms of what we call discretionary time, how much do we actually have? And how are we spending it?”

- Randy Alcorn

Does It Matter How We Spend Our Free Time? - Eternal Perspective Ministries

EXTRA CREDIT: How about an extra serving of wisdom to go with the above?

“Sometimes we tend to say yes to too many of the good things, leaving us exhausted and unable to bring our best to those relatively few God-things...(Of course, some people are not saying yes to the things God calls them to, because they’re saying yes instead to three hours of TV and internet surfing or video games each night. I’m talking now about those who are using their time wisely but are still feeling overwhelmed.)”

- Randy Alcorn

Planned Neglect: Saying No to Good Things So We Can Say Yes to the Best - Eternal Perspective Ministries



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Do you find that you **want** to spend more time reading Scripture and praying, but those things seem to end up last on your list, usually after you run out of time and energy for doing so? What could you change to put God first in your day, such as waking up a bit earlier to read the Bible, putting your cellphone down, watching less TV, one less hour of gaming, etc.? Try changing your routine for a week and see if it makes a difference in how you live your days.

“But as years passed, life got busy. First, he got promoted. Then came a girlfriend who said she was a Christian but didn’t really care for church. Weekends filled up. Bible time turned into ‘when I get to it.’ One day, he skipped church for a cabin trip. Then another. Then another. Slowly, he found himself saying things like ‘God knows my heart’ or ‘It’s not about religion, it’s about relationship,’ even though he knew he was neglecting the relationship.”

- Tim Burt

The Walk of Three Phases - Tim Burt

BONUS THOUGHTS TO PONDER: *“The best-laid plans of mice and men ... and Henry Bemis, the small man in the glasses who wanted nothing but time. Henry Bemis, now just a part of a smashed landscape, just a piece of the rubble, just a fragment of what man has deeded to himself. Mr. Henry Bemis, in the Twilight Zone.”*

- Rod Serling

Luke 12:15-21 TLB “Beware! Don’t always be wishing for what you don’t have. For real life and real living are not related to how rich we are.” Then he gave an illustration: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. In fact, his barns were full to overflowing—he couldn’t get everything in. He thought about his problem, and finally exclaimed, ‘I know—I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones! Then I’ll have room enough. And I’ll sit back and say to myself, ‘Friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Wine, women, and song for you!’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. Then who will get it all?’ Yes, every man is a fool who gets rich on earth but not in heaven.”

EXTRA EXTRA CREDIT: How about re-telling Henry Bemis’ story using a young person in today’s world. What would they miss the most? Could they survive without electronic media?

5. Just as Henry’s soon to be shortened life was shaken up when the H-bomb dropped, we also have to face the bombs that drop into our lives such as the death of a loved one, crime, poverty, betrayal, etc. What can we do when life bombs *us*? Have you ever felt like the turtle in the blogpost below?

“No matter how big or small the hardship, how long it lasts, how temporary or permanent the consequences, we have to cope. Sometimes we cope well, and other times we don’t. You may recall examples of both in your own past. But we don’t have to cope alone!”

- Clyde Kilough

Seven Keys to Coping With the Trials and Tribulations of Life



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Have you ever gotten so down and out that you said, “All that’s left for me now is to pray.”? Actually, having the ability and access to speak, worship and pray to the **King and Creator** of the universe is the highest place you could go to!

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 NLT We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

Isaiah 41:10 AMPC Fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror *and* be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen *and* harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up *and* retain you with My [victorious] right hand of rightness *and* justice.

“It’s called walking by faith, not by sight ([2 Corinthians 5:7 NIV](#)). Sight only tells us one thing—when we see God has intervened. Faith tells us He will. We only see the past and present, and even then our perspective is often not very clear. But spiritually, God helps us see what lies ahead.”

- Clyde Kilough

Proverbs 3:5-6 GNT Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the LORD in everything you do, and He will show you the right way.

"Faith, according to the Bible, is so much more than just belief. It's that deep, unshakable trust in God's promises - a confidence that He is who He says He is and will do what He's promised, even when we can't see the outcome...So, to walk by faith is to live with that trust at the core of our lives, letting it guide every choice, every step, and every hope, especially when things seem unclear."

- Candice Lucey

What Does It Mean to Walk by Faith and Not by Sight? (2 Corinthians 5:7) | Christianity.com

6. *"He had been tempted to enter many times. He had watched the people through the open doors, the man in greasy work clothes who sat near the door, night after night, laboriously studying, a technical journal perhaps, difficult for him, but promising a brighter future. There had been an aged, scholarly gentleman who sat on the other side of the door, leisurely paging, moving his lips a little as he did so, a man having little time left, but rich in time because he could do with it as he chose...Henry had never gone in. He had started up the steps once, got almost to the door, but then he remembered Agnes, her questions and shouting, and he had turned away."*

In an atmosphere of total destruction, Henry finds his salvation - the Public Library! It seems to me like a perfect metaphor for God's Church. People are happily inside, worshipping, reading the Bible, enjoying fellowship and praising the Word that truly promises a better future for all who enter. Sadly, Henry had never entered the building, and to keep up with the metaphor, there are non-believers who will never go in to be with the Body of Christ, all for various reasons. How can they be drawn in?

John 16:7-10 AMPC However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you]. And when He comes, He will convict *and* convince the world *and* bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me]; About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer...

John 3:16-17 ESV "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Colossians 4:5-6 AMP Conduct yourself with wisdom in your interactions with outsiders (non-believers), make the most of each opportunity [treating it as something precious]. Let your speech at all times be gracious *and* pleasant, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how to answer each one [who questions you].

"Does the Holy Spirit draw everyone?" The answer, biblically, is yes. The Spirit draws all people, but not all respond positively. The drawing is universal in scope, but resistible in nature...the Spirit draws everyone. That drawing is strong, persuasive, and always rooted in truth. But it does not override the human will. The gospel goes out to all. Faith remains the response God requires. The invitation is real. The decision is yours."

- Steven R. Cook

Does the Spirit Draw Everyone? - Thinking on Scripture

"Let the rumors of Your kingdom, / let Your name without reserve flood the earth. / Break down the walls. / Push back the dark. / Light of the world, move in our hearts. / Heaven, flood the earth. / Freedom is here. / Fear has to leave. / Pain has to go. / Darkness retreat. / Heaven, flood the earth."

- Jesus Culture



▶ **Jesus Culture - Flood The Earth (Live) ft. Katie Torwalt**

"As we serve, worship, and live in community together, the body of Christ reflects who God is. Together, we are the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14-16](#)). For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship should be regular aspects of a believer's life. Weekly church attendance is in no sense "required" for believers, but someone who belongs to Christ should have a desire to worship God, receive His Word, and fellowship with other believers."

- [Got Questions](#)

[Why is church attendance / going to church important? | GotQuestions.org](#)

REAL LIFE: You have to feel for poor Henry after his "Coke bottle" glasses broke! We can all agree that being born blind would definitely be a worse fate, though. Below is the story of a courageous woman who didn't let her lack of sight stop her from serving Jesus.

"Blind for all of her life, Fanny Crosby, is considered by many the greatest hymn writer in the history of the Christian Church. She saw over 8,500 poems set to music and over 100,000,000 copies of her songs printed. To show her humility, as many as 150 different pen names were used by her so the public wouldn't know she wrote so large a number of them. She produced as many as seven hymn-poems in one day. On several occasions, upon hearing an unfamiliar hymn sung, she would inquire about the author, and find it to be one of her own!"

- Micah Hendry

[Hymn History: My Savior First of All - Enjoying the Journey](#)

"When my lifework is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, when the bright and glorious morning I shall see; / I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, and His smile will be the first to welcome me...I shall know Him, I shall know Him, and redeemed by His side I shall stand. / I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand."

- Fanny Crosby



▶ **My Savior First of All - Bernie & Carol Paulson**

APOLO-GET-ITS: The amazing hymn writer above was once asked the following question:

"'Fanny, you have been blind all of your life. Since you have never seen anyone, when you get to Heaven, how will you know who Jesus is?' 'That's easy', said Fanny. 'I will just walk all over heaven and ask people if I may see their hands. When I see Jesus' nail prints in His hands, I will know who He is.'"

- [Enjoying the Journey](#)

It's hard to imagine the reality of Jesus' crucifixion, let alone knowing how to prove it was a true historical event! The following post explores what it was and why it matters.

*"The pain was absolutely unbearable. In fact, it was literally beyond words to describe; they had to invent a new word, **excruciating**. Literally, excruciating means 'out of the cross.' Think about that: they needed a new word, because there was nothing in the language that could describe the intense anguish caused during crucifixion."*

- Alexander Metherell

[The crucifixion of Jesus: What is it? Why does it matter? | carm.org](https://carm.org)

"Dr. Metherell explains to Lee Strobel that Jesus Christ did die on the cross, pushing Lee to believe in a more scientific based proof in Jesus Christ."

- The Case for Christ

▶ Dr. Metherell scene from The Case For Christ

EXTRA CREDIT: Here's the trailer to the above film. How about watching it? Check for it on your streaming services!

▶ The Case for Christ Official Trailer 1 (2017) - Mike Vogel Movie

How about giving a listen to the movie's theme song?

"Lord, I was searching. / You came and found me. / You took every wall down that I built around me. / Your word removed my heart of stone and set me free. / My every doubt is gone, my God, I do believe and now I see. / I believe in the promise of Your love. / And now I'm free, I receive who You've called me to become. / All the evidence is opening eyes. / All the evidence is opening eyes. / In the case for Christ, in the case for Christ."

- J. T. Murrell



▶ JT Murrell - "The Case For Christ" Music Video (Acoustic)

LOVE TO LINK!

The depth of content offered in the Think Above the Box Study Guides would not have been possible without the many talents and Spirit-inspired links that are included for each book. Isn't it great that while you use the study guides you can click on a link and go to these great sites without searching for them?

We would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to all the Bible publishers, pastors, bloggers, filmmakers, musicians and Christian media websites for the vast amount of information they provide online. Your efforts are truly a blessing to all who access your sites!

TAB highly encourages students to explore each of the links at their leisure as it is like going down a holy rabbit hole!

[Project Gutenberg](#)

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[Got Questions](#)

[Youtube - Calling Glory](#)

[Christian Post](#)

[BibleRef.com](#)

[The Louvin Brothers](#)

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Afterword

Please check out our site **Think Above the Box** for more study guides, blogs, and links to thought-provoking material.

*And please leave us a note on our site about your experience!
We would love to hear your comments!*



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.