

FINDING THE
TRUTH
OF LIFE

PAUL V. SUFFRITI

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BY PAUL V. SUFFRITI



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All scripture is from the King James Version

One VINCENT

Vincent searches for the answer that would reveal the reason why God created man. God knew that it would be a world filled with pain, suffering, and hatred with selfishness of the heart, so why would God create man? Vincent is given knowledge that uncovers the revelation of the truth of life. His search for the truth began when he was in his youth.

Vincent was born in the early nineteen fifties, and he learned the love of God through the Catholic faith. His mother made sure he went to church and attended Sunday school classes. This is where Vincent learned about God Almighty, creator of all life. He was told there was no greater love than the love of God. The priest told him his church was the home of God. Vincent knew there were many churches in his town and wondered why God picked his church as His home. His mother told him God was not just in his church but everywhere. Vincent looked up to the clouds in the sky and thought God must be magical. He felt comfort in knowing that God would always be there watching over him with loving care.

Vincent was an inquisitive child. The day he learned about hell in Sunday school was a day Vincent asked many questions. Vincent had a hard time understanding why God, with unmeasured love for all creation, would create a place for those

that disobeyed Him. The disobedient would suffer in torment forever in hell. He was confused and afraid at the same time. He could not understand why God would torture forever someone He created and loved. It seemed like a cruel thing to Vincent. He thought what kind of God, with love unequalled, would do such a thing to loved ones. Vincent became fearful of God, hoping he would not get Him mad. He began thinking about living in heaven. What if he got God upset? Would God send him to hell to suffer forever? Was heaven a permanent place to live? If God made hell for those He was not happy with then He could change anything at anytime. He asked his Mother why God made hell. She explained what happened in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

God had placed a tree of knowledge in the mist of the garden. God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from that tree. He wanted to know if they loved Him more than their want for the fruit of knowledge. Vincent learned about the devil that day. His mother explained that Satan took the form of a serpent and tempted Eve to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Eve told the serpent that God said she would die if she ate of the fruit or even touched it. Satan deceived Eve by saying, "God will not let you die. He does not want you to have the power of knowledge like Him." Eve trusted the serpent rather than believe in the will of God, and she ate the fruit. She then gave the fruit to Adam, and he ate it. They both disobeyed God. Vincent asked if Adam and Eve were suffering in hell for disobeying God. His mother was not sure where they were. He wanted to know more about Adam and Eve, God, and the devil. Vincent was told that God knew everything before it happened. He asked why God created Adam and Eve and tempted them with the fruit of knowledge. His mother said God gave them free will and wanted to know if they loved Him more than anything.

Vincent had a mind that thought logically. Vincent responded, “If God knows everything even before it happens, then He knew Adam and Eve would disobey Him even before He created them. Why would God do such a thing? Why would He let the devil deceive Adam and Eve to disobey Him? Why did not God get rid of Satan before He created Adam and Eve?”

Vincent was having trouble understanding the love of God. It seemed like God created such a mess. Vincent thought there had to be a logical reason for creating man. He was fearful of God trying to be good so he would not suffer in hell forever. His mother did not have all the answers to his questions, but explained what she could.

Vincent asked his mother why would what Adam and Eve did affect him. He was told about original sin. She explained that we inherited the sin of disobedience from Adam and Eve. Vincent did not think it was right that he should take responsibility for something someone else did.

He was told baptism took away original sin. He did not understand baptism. Vincent was told he was baptized before he was a year old and was safe from original sin. He asked what would happen to babies who died before they were baptized. His mother said they would exist in Limbo. He asked about Limbo. His mother said Limbo was a place other than heaven, hell, or purgatory. This made no sense to Vincent. He visualized Limbo as a place of darkness where babies were floating around alone forever. It seemed like a cruel place, but he thought it was better than suffering in hell forever.

Sin was another thing that clouded his logical thinking. Vincent was told that all sin was against the love of God, but different sins had different consequences. There was mortal sin. This was breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Mortal sin could result in suffering in hell forever. He did not think all the

Ten Commandments were equal. He asked how could honor thy father and thy mother be the same as thou shall not kill. Vincent could not understand how being disrespectful to a parent would be the same as killing someone. He had a hard time keeping it in perspective, but the law was the law and who was he to question the law of God? There was venial sin. This was a lesser sin that would not condemn someone to suffer in hell forever. It would require someone to spend time in purgatory. Venial sins were like lying and swearing. His mother told him that one lie could require as many as five thousand years in purgatory. Vincent made sure he knew which sins could send him to hell and which sins would result in spending time in purgatory. His mother said he could pray for those in purgatory to help them get to heaven sooner. Vincent thought if he ended up in purgatory that he would want someone to pray for him so he would get to heaven quicker. Vincent thought that the way God dealt with sin seemed complicated.

The best thing Vincent learned about the love of God was about His Son Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to die as an innocent sacrifice for all the sins of man. Jesus Christ was his hero. If he believed in Jesus Christ as his savior and confessed all his sins, Jesus would forgive him, and Vincent would be cleansed of his sins. This was the greatest news in his young life. Vincent had hope of going to heaven through Jesus Christ.

Vincent was about to receive his first communion and was happy to have Jesus Christ in his life. He went to confession on Saturday and confessed all his sins to a priest. His mother told him to make sure he confessed everything because God would know if he did not. This became a regular thing every Saturday. After he confessed all his sins, the priest would give him penance. The more sins he confessed, the more Hail Mary's, Our Fathers, and Act of Contrition were required. Vincent felt embarrassed

confessing his sins to a priest but relieved after leaving the church. Vincent and his brothers had to make sure they did not sin before they received Holy Communion on Sunday.

Vincent would daydream about dying. He wanted to die on either a Saturday or a Sunday because he knew Jesus covered his confessed sins, and he would go to heaven. Dying Monday through Friday might be risky. He could sin and might not have the opportunity to confess before confession on Saturday. Vincent still wondered why God would go through everything with Adam and Eve and have sin enter our lives just to have His Son crucified for our sins. He believed God could have avoided everything if He wanted.

Vincent remembered hearing about an incident that happened to him when he was almost a year old. His mother was in the basement doing laundry. The basement door was slightly open. He was in a walker and opened the door. Vincent fell down the stairs and smashed his head on the cement floor at the bottom. He severely fractured his skull and had less than a fifty percent chance of survival. Vincent had already been baptized. He asked his mother why God did not take him to heaven. If God really loved Vincent then He could have saved him from the misery and pains of the world. What if Vincent grew up and died in sin just to suffer in hell forever? His mother told him that God knows all things and had plans for him. Vincent thought about what his mother said many times in his youth. He believed he would probably not die in mortal sin. God would have taken him as an infant knowing how his life would turn out.

When Vincent was five years old, he had a memory about that incident as an infant. It was his older brother's birthday. Vincent was running in the house and fell, hitting his forehead into the corner of a wall and splitting his head open. He knocked himself out. When he was in the hospital, he dreamt

he was an infant wrapped in a blanket. He had seen himself rise through and above the trees up to the clouds. As he rose above the clouds, he began to descend back through the clouds and down to Earth. Vincent remembered opening his eyes and looking at his father. He believed it was a memory of a near-death experience as an infant.

Vincent had a cousin who lived next door. She was mentally impaired. He wondered why God would allow someone to go through life with such a condition. Vincent asked what would happen to her when she died. He was told her condition was part of the misery and disease caused by the sins of the world. In a perfect world, there would be no misery, disease, or anyone mentally impaired. His mother said she would not be responsible for her actions because she was not in her right mind. She would go to heaven and live as a whole person in paradise forever.

Vincent often wondered what would be best: living impaired and receive a free pass to heaven or live a normal life and maybe getting to heaven. He often wondered who was really better off.

His best friend was a Protestant. The Catholic Church did not want Catholics playing with Protestants. Vincent asked his mother why. He asked if Protestants were Christians that believed in Jesus Christ. His mother said yes. He could not understand why he could not play with someone that believed in salvation through Jesus Christ. Vincent asked his mother many questions about Protestants. He learned Protestants did not have statues of the Virgin Mary, Saints, or even Jesus Christ on the cross in their church. They did not pray to the Virgin Mary or the Saints for help and guidance. Catholics and Protestants both believed in salvation through Jesus Christ, and that seemed to be the most important thing. His mother let him play with his best friend despite the rules of the Catholic Church.

Vincent questioned almost everything. When his mother

would say something or explain something, he would have either the dictionary or encyclopedia out to prove all things as fact. His father told him he was a troublemaker for questioning what his mother said as truth. Vincent wanted to know what the truth was and had to prove all explanations.

There came a time when he questioned the Catholic Church. He was about eleven years of age. Catholics did not eat meat on Friday. Vincent was taught it was a sin. He did not know why it was a sin. Then the Pope proclaimed abstaining from eating meat on Friday would not be a requirement. Vincent was confused. Eating meat on Friday had been a sin that had to be confessed to a priest, and now it was not a sin. He asked his mother how the Pope could dismiss a sin against God. She explained that it really was not a sin against God. The Church established the law to reverence God through abstinence. Vincent wondered what other things the Church established that were not of God.

The Sunday school teachers did not have all the answers to some of his questions. A universal answer he heard was that some things we just believe through blind faith. He thought to himself that everything has a logical explanation. The teachers just did not know the explanation. Vincent wondered if they even wanted to know, or if they were just content, believing what was being told was the truth. Vincent had a hard time finding answers to some of his questions when no one could give him a valid explanation. The one fact Vincent could depend on was that Jesus Christ died for his sins and through Him he was saved from eternal damnation. He knew this was the established understanding everyone believed and professed. It was the cornerstone for all churches throughout the world, both Catholic and Protestant. Vincent could live with the unanswered questions knowing Jesus was his savior.

After years of confession and Holy Communion, Vincent

observed and realized many church members were caught up in a cycle of sin. One Sunday after church service, he overheard church members gossiping and badmouthing other church members. The church members had just received Holy Communion, the body of Christ, and yet they began sinning as soon as they left church. Vincent visualized people sinning all week, going to confession on Saturday, and receiving Holy Communion on Sunday only to start sinning again. Vincent was part of this cycle. It would probably continue until he died. Vincent wondered if this is what Jesus wanted. He thought about how much effort he should give to be good if Jesus would always forgive him when he confessed his sins. He could be like the thief that was crucified next to Jesus. The thief asked Jesus to remember him right before he died. Jesus told him he would be in paradise. Vincent often thought about the thief and visualized himself doing what he wanted and right before he died asking Jesus for forgiveness. The priest told Vincent to try and be good as possible and ask Jesus for forgiveness when he fell short. He wondered how much he should really try. Vincent felt there was a real disconnect. His ultimate goal was to make it to heaven and live with God forever.

Vincent wanted to know why God did not end the world when Jesus died on the cross for all the sins of man. He asked the priest why life on earth continued. Vincent wanted to know what the purpose was. He could not imagine why God wanted the pain and suffering to continue. He sometimes wondered why people were born just to go through sadness, despair, and pain to eventually die. He thought it was sad to think there was no logical purpose to exist in the flesh but to get to heaven. Vincent accepted what he was taught through church doctrine. He was determined to go through life trying to be good, asking Jesus for forgiveness when he sinned, and ending up in heaven when he

died. Vincent knew this was the path of life for all Christians that wanted to live with God forever.

By the time Vincent was a teenager he did not ask as many questions in Sunday school classes. He did not seem to care as much. Sports, girls, and hanging out with his friends were the most important things in his life. God and everything else was not as important to Vincent. An inappropriate incident with a priest when he was a young teenager changed his view of the church. He withdrew his interest in the message of love the priest would preach. Vincent kept his distance, just going through the motions every Sunday. Alcohol and experimenting with drugs began to fill his teenage years. Getting high was a good way to forget about all the issues that were going on in his life. Vincent thought it was a good way to laugh at everything for no good reason. Church and God took a back seat to his daily wants and desires. He was focused on the moment. His long-term life was not important to him as a teenager.

By the time Vincent graduated from high school, he was not going to church every Sunday. He was not thinking about Jesus or God the Father every day. He would wake up every morning and deal with the things that crossed his path that day. Vincent was going through the motions of life on automatic pilot. There was a great disconnect between his physical existence and the spiritual love of God.

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