

What is God's will for my Life? - Pastor Doug Batchelor

Wilma Rudolph faced adversity from the very beginning. She was born prematurely, only weighed four and a half pounds. Then her mother needed to nurse her through one childhood illness after another. By the time she was four years old, she contracted double pneumonia and polio, leaving her left leg seriously deformed and paralyzed. The doctor said she'd probably never walk again without assistance. But Wilma had great courage and belief that God had a special plan for her life, so she persisted. By the time she was seven, they fitted her with a leg brace so that she could limp around. She shocked the doctors when two years later she threw away her brace and began to walk. By the time she was 13, she walked with rhythm. Then she decided she wanted to run.

People told her not to try because they thought it'd be pathetic. First few races she entered, she always came in last. But gradually she crept [sic] her way up until she won her first race. And from then on she won every race she entered... Ultimately winning three olympic gold medals, running.

Makes you wonder if wilma faced so much adversity at the beginning because God had a special plan for her life and she needed that. You might be wondering, what is God's plan or will for your life? That's why it's good that you're here for M.I.Q. How can I know that God is listening? Did I come from apes or prehistoric sludge? Can the Bible be trusted? What should I do with my life? College? Cars? A job? Can I ever be perfect? Can I make a difference? [Questioning simultaneously] ...or what? Announcer: "M.I.Q.": Your questions, God's answers. Now what? What does God want you to do with your life? Find out next. Join us now for m.

i.q. Hello everybody, this is M.I.Q.: Most important questions. Welcome to our audience here in cedar lake, Michigan, and also those of you who are watching on the various television channels, and also those watching online. Thank you for joining us again. And a special welcome to the more than 1,000 registered sites participating in this live, interactive search for truth.

And if you have a Bible question, we'd like to hear from you. You can go to the M.I.Q. Teens website, miqteens.com, and you can post your question online, or you can send us a text message. The number to send your text message to is 760-523-2287. Now friends, we have a very important program this evening.

I'm just delighted that you're all here. I'd also like to remind you of the resource that we've been talking about at each evening, and that is the M.I.Q. Teens answer book. I hope those here in our live audience, you've all received your book. And those watching, you can go to the m.

i.q. Teens website, and you can find out more about this great resource. It's filled with fascinating facts, Scripture and answers that make sense. So go to miqteens.com to learn more. Well, it's time for our theme song.

I'd like to invite our song leaders to please come forward. Immediately following The Song, bethany will be having our opening prayer. Please stand. When I gaze up at the countless stars or on an endless sea my mind may swim with questions bewildering to me but then I read the Bible and seek your face in prayer I'm satisfied remembering your loving grace and care whatever questions I may have whether great or small I know Jesus died to save me and that he forgave me Jesus is the answer to it all Jesus is the answer to it all I have so many questions I wonder in my heart how something comes from nothing when did forever start why can't I see your glory where is the promised land I trust that you will lead me there if I can take your hand whatever questions I may have whether great or small I know Jesus died to save me and that he forgave me Jesus is the answer to it all Jesus is the answer to it all dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much for this opportunity to be here and to learn more about you. Thank you so much for sending your son to die for us.

And I pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to be with us in this meeting. Please be with Pastor Doug as he preaches and just give him words to speak. We thank you so much. In Jesus' Name, amen. Pastor Doug: amen.

Hey, you know, I saw something exciting today. Someone back at the Amazing Facts office sent us an email with some statistics. I don't know if you got that, but it had -- the questions that were coming in, where they're coming from, and I never got to the bottom of the list. But it's all over the world: australia, and Canada, and new guinea, south africa. Just everywhere.

Korea. And of course, most of these places there's an english-speaking population, but we wanna welcome our friends who are watching all over the world for the most important questions. We're dealing with some of the pertinent Amazing Facts for teens. And we're very glad that you're here. We have a lot to cover tonight, so.

.. Alright, well, let's get to our questions for this evening. And I think we're ready for the first one. Hey, my name's brandon, and my question is, is it okay to get a memorial tattoo of someone that just passed away? Well, I think I can understand the heart of this question. Those of you who watched an earlier program, we got a question about tattoos.

We showed you that verse in Leviticus where it says that you shouldn't make any cuttings in your flesh or be tattooed for God says, "I am holy." Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Well, what if the tattoo has some affectionate idea behind it? Or it's to remember somebody? Or if it's somebody that you love? Or if you put -- you know, a lot of sailors put, "mom." I mean, is it okay to tattoo "mom" with a heart? Well, you know, if the Lord says don't do something, then you don't do it. There's a lot of examples where people think, "well, but can't you sanctify it and then make it okay?" God says your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. There's a thousand ways to show your love for people, your respect for people or to memorialize somebody other than stabbing ink under your skins. So if God says don't do it; that doesn't change.

Alright, well Pastor Doug, we have a question that came in from, I believe, West Virginia. We'll take a look at that now. Another good question. Well, of course, Jesus said very plainly to his disciples, "I'm going to be betrayed, I'm gonna be beaten, I'll be mistreated, I'll be crucified and I'll rise the third day." Well, when Jesus was on the cross and The Father withdrew his presence from Jesus, then, I believe, that the Lord felt that the weight of sin was so awful he may have had moments where he was wondering, "how could I ever be reconciled to a holy God?" Of course, his final words on the cross were those of victory -- "father, into your hands I command my spirit" -- and words of faith. But it was a tremendous struggle for Jesus and The Father to be separated for the first time in eternity.

And so it was a tremendous sacrifice also for him to suffer the way he did. Keep in mind Jesus did not suffer like you and I suffer. He was suffering for the sins of the whole world. He didn't suffer as a man; he suffered as God who had become man. So you and I cannot even comprehend what Jesus went through.

I don't know too many people that perspire blood, but the agony of what he went through and just the weight of the sins and the separation from The Father was, I think, the most painful for him. All right, well, I think we're ready for the next question. Hi, my name is delaney. My question is, how do we figure out the balance of our lives? Where do we fit God in with our social life and our school life and all the other things going on and make it healthy for us? Good question. How do we fit God into our lives when, especially -- we are living in the busiest age in the history of the world.

There's so much going on. There's so much stress. So many things that can distract our attention. How do you fit God in? Have you seen the illustration before where a person takes a jar and they've got all these rocks, and gravel and sand? And if you put in the sand and the gravel first, you'll never get the big rocks in. You gotta put the big rocks in first, and then you can put in the sand and gravel and shake them down.

The idea is not, where do we manage to shake and squeeze God into our lives? That's a common mistake people make. How do we fit God in? I'd like to suggest you start with God at the foundation, that he is the first thing you put in. And then you say, "where do I fit in the other things?" See, God needs to be just saturated in every fiber of our lives. Daniel's a great example in the Bible. King David, psalm 55 he said, "morning, evening and at noon will I pray.

" And so they just spent their lives walking with the Lord. You know, that's the key: is when we learn to have such a close relationship with the Lord, it's not like, "okay, well, do I have time to squeeze God in this day of the week?" Or "can I take a few minutes this day for prayer?" It's having an attitude of being in the presence of God, that Jesus is here now. He's always with you. And that's something you should nurture, and it gets better with practice. Practice learning that God is always there and walking with him.

Enoch walked with God; God took him to heaven. Noah walked with God. the Lord's looking for another generation that will walk with him. Well, thank you, Pastor Doug. I think we have one more question.

Hi, I'm sam. My question for Doug Batchelor is how do I know what God wants me to do with my life? Pastor Doug: that is a great question. If it's okay, I'm gonna use that question to segue into our presentation for tonight. Because tonight's lesson is dealing the subject of the will of God. And so, thank you very much for your questions.

Wanna remind them of the website one more time? The website is miqteens.com, or you can send us your text questions at 760-523-2287. Thank you, Pastor Doug. Thank you, Pastor Ross. I just dated myself. I said the fax number instead of the text number.

Tonight is going to be different from every other night in that we have been going through our most important question answer book. And tonight there is a subject that specifically deals with, "how do I know God's will for my life?" I'd like to recommend that everybody looks at this because in this lesson, we take you through a series of biblical steps on how you can determine God's will for your life. And first of all, His Word, Christian counsel, pray for the guidance of his spirit, look for providential openings, God will open doors, find out what your gifts are. And so, there is a number of steps in there, and I just wanted to briefly touch on that. Now, tonight I'm going to do something that is a little different in that I'm gonna share with you my personal story in how I became a Christian and just the journey the Lord brought me on, and I hope you'll pray for me as I do.

Because whenever you do this, where you take some time and talk about yourself, there's always the risk that you'll be lifting up or glorifying yourself. That's always so natural to do that. Always kind of make things bigger than life. It's like the nine-year-old girl that did a book report on Abraham lincoln and she wanted to make a good impression. So when she stood before the class to introduce her book report she said, "Abraham lincoln was born at a very early age in a log cabin he built with his own hands.

" And so things can kinda get bigger than life. And I'd like to begin with a Scripture. And this is found in 1 Peter 2:9. The Bible says, "you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." His own special people. "That you should proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

" And I just like to begin by thanking the Lord. He has been so good to me and called me out of great darkness into his marvelous light. And he has a special plan for everybody's life. I believe he's knocking on the doors of every person. Now, many people think -- oh, and by the way, the story that I'm sharing I'm just gonna condense what's found in the book.

Some of you have maybe heard about the the richest caveman book. And we're just very pleased: it's in about, I think 13, 14 languages right now, and God has really blessed the testimony. And we praise him for that. But I'm just gonna have about 40 minutes to share with you a summary of what the Lord has done. By the way, the testimony's not over yet; I'm still living it, and I hope there's more to come.

Everybody wants to be happy. And people are looking for happiness in many different places. You know, much of the world thinks that happiness comes from fame and fortune. "If I could have more money, I'd be happy. If I could be more popular, better looking, I'd be happy.

" And God placed me in a very interesting family where I saw firsthand this is just not true. Unusual parents. My mother and father were diametric opposites. This is one of the probably best pictures I've got of mom and dad. He was a republican; she was a democrat.

He was a redneck; she was born in New York city. Just totally opposite. She was a women's libber; he wanted a wife that would stay home and just cook. And it was amazing they ever got together, but they did. And maybe I'll talk about dad first to start with.

He was born in Oklahoma. Lived there during the depression. Was very poor when he was young. And some of you heard about the dust bowl times. His father died when he was seven years old, leaving him with three younger brothers during the depression, and he learned to work very hard.

Came to California looking for work, ended up learning how to fly, became an aviator and then world war ii broke out. Then he became a pilot during world war ii and a captain. He was there d-day and that's another whole story. But after the war, he began to buy and sell airplanes. And he's a very shrewd businessman and started making a lot of money and became a very successful executive.

Eventually had his own companies, leasing companies. This one says, "airline executive, December, 1981." Made millions of dollars. At one point, he owned two airlines. He was friends with howard hughes, kirk kerkorian, who owned the -- well, he owned chrysler for a while, m.g.m. Grand and some other things.

Here's a newspaper clipping: he started -- I was born in burbank. He started in California and then he moved out to miami, florida for the international base that was developing and down to south America. And he liked to live in the fast lane. Dad raced cars. He had his own racecars.

He'd go out racing and he knew the various racers. This is when he was much older. He had all the toys that millionaires have. We had a house right on the water. We had a yacht in the backyard.

Of course my name is Batchelor, so he named the yacht the Batchelor party, which would seem appropriate. And I just threw this in because this is actually photographed inside the living room. It was really nice. And we lived on an island, well, at least when I lived with dad. This is a Google picture.

I added this recently. These are called the sunset islands in miami beach. That top island there was sunset island number one, and dad lived at the top of it. We lived right on the bay there in miami. And we had three boats in our backyard.

And so, dad had a lot of money. And had a learjet. Here's one picture I snapped of -- believe it or not, that's me. Haven't changed a bit, have i? And that's my stepmother. That was dad's wife number three.

She used to be miss Kentucky. Very nice lady. So dad had all the toys. He had a lot of money. He knew the presidents.

And happiness does not come from the abundance of things that you possess. Now, just to give you a little idea of what I'm talking about I think most of you know this next person I'm gonna put on the screen. Some of you know a few years ago donald divorced, I think it was wife number two, ivana. And because she had signed a prenuptial agreement, she only got \$14 million. Well, when betty divorced my dad, because she had signed a prenuptial agreement, she only got \$17 million.

It was the largest divorce settlement in florida's history. And so, he had a lot of money. And when I was with dad we were exposed to all that. Happiness does not come from money. He was successful in business.

Here's a paper from -- this is front page of miami herald business section, 1992. And you may not be able to read that; I'll try and read it to you. "At 71, aviation pioneer george Batchelor isn't ready to descend. He runs one of miami's most successful businesses. He pilots jets, races cars, water skis, and is soon to wed a bride, age 29.

" And he was 71. I'll tell you, it was really strange in our home. I mean, here we already had a whole litter of kids. And just think about this for a second. Now, my wife's six years younger than me.

My father, when he married wife number four -- and that wasn't the last of it -- my father's mother-in-law was younger than me. And he was 71. My stepmother was younger than my wife. And she had a

brother who was 11. So here my father is 71, he's got a brother-in-law that's 11.

I tell you, it was really weird. [Laughter] and I'm sure she married him for his good looks and his winning disposition. [Laughter] sorry to be cynical. And this is the inside part of that story, miami herald, "at 71, Batchelor going on 16." So that just helps you understand at least half of my d.n.a. And here's a picture that I've got -- I think this is one of the only pictures I've got.

That's my brother falcon, on the left. My dad named us after airplanes. I was named "douglas," after the d.c. Craft, mcdonnell douglas', d.c. Craft.

And my poor brother was named falcon. Can you imagine growing up with the name "falcon Batchelor?" He really got teased a lot. He had cystic fibrosis and so he really struggled. He had flaming red hair. I didn't have any hair, he had freckles and brown eyes.

I have blue eyes. The same mom and dad; just we didn't look a lot alike. That was his wife sandy, and that's my dad, who I think had already started drinking at that point, and that was wife number four there. And she did have connections though, because she managed to get dad in to visit with pope John Paul the second. And if you're willing to make a two million-dollar donation, you can get a picture with the pope also.

So, you know, he knew the different people and he had a lot of money. But he wasn't very happy. Matter of fact, he would drink himself to sleep every night. Here's a picture of Karen. And that was the same day that we took that former picture with my brother.

My dad just had so much stress from his work, Karen's a physical therapist and she was trying to work some of the knots out for dad. But money doesn't make a very good foundation for your life. Even though he had the yacht, the rolls royce and the jet and all the money, he drank himself to sleep every night, and I saw that. And he was work, work, work. He never had time for the family.

Now, on the other side of the coin then, you've got my mom. And mom was very different from dad. Mom was from a Jewish background; dad was from a baptist background. They both pretty much were atheist or agnostic by the time they met. And, that's a picture of my mom and my brother and i.

And mom was very talented. Even though she didn't have a lot of formal education, she used to write songs and she could sing and she taught herself to play a couple of instruments. And she began writing songs at 18 or 19 for some famous people. She used to write for elvis presley and she would write, she wrote songs for frank sinatra, and she began to get involved in show business. She was a small part actress, but probably her greatest success came, she was even in the movie the Ten Commandments.

Little part. You gotta go, "there's mom!" Kids always say, "where's grandma?" "There she is." But most of what she did was not only writing songs and hosting programs, she was the film critic. She was the president of the film critics association in beverly hills, and she also was the film critic for good morning America. And it gave you a lot of power. And she knew a lot of people in hollywood and they knew her.

Because if you say a movie is successful, the studios make a lot of money. If you say, in writing, the movie is just not any good, they lose millions. And so they were very afraid of mom, and they would send her gifts and free trips and free restaurants and mom knew how to exploit that all too. And I've just gotta, I tell people this and I thought, "well, I better throw some pictures in," so here's a couple of quick pictures of some people you may... Recognize.

Here's mom and mohammed ali in younger days. Matter of fact, most of these pictures about 25 years old. Here's mom with a younger sylvester stallone. The next one is one of my favorites because I was there that day, is mom with the three stooges. Now, that's the original moe and larry on the right, and they had a substitute curly that filled in for a program.

Mom wrote a musical that was on. And then, what do we got next? Mom, I think, with jimmy stewart. Some of you remember that famed actor. Here's a picture of mom having dinner with bob hope. And we put all these just in black and white to kind of make them fit.

Now, she's still acting today, I believe. This is a picture of mom with sally field. I think most of us know the director and actor, clint eastwood. And -- now, I didn't know all these people. We knew some of them.

Some of them were academy award winners that would come over to our house. Here's mom with Paul newman. And Paul also raced cars. I think dad knew him. And here's mom with dustin hoffman.

And so, she knew all these people in hollywood, but you know, when mom finally got her final illness, and we went to see her at the hospital... Nobody was there but Karen and I and grandma and grandpa. People just, it was so shallow, it was such an artificial world and basically, she died alone. People don't care. Fame is so fleeting, and it's such a cutthroat industry.

Well, I grew up surrounded by that and I could quickly see people weren't happy. Fame didn't bring happiness. Money didn't bring happiness. And I began to wonder, "where does happiness come from?" So I started searching. Now, you know, I was born in burbank but moved to New York city, and that's where I grew up.

And I think about six years old, we moved to manhattan, one of the biggest cities of the world, we lived right in the middle of the city, 51st street, 81st street. And I was exposed to a lot of things that probably... Nobody should be exposed to, and at a very early age, because mom was so busy with her career, my brother and I just kind of took care of ourselves a lot of the time. And I got into so much trouble -- I think it's because I wanted my parents' attention -- that I went to 14 different schools, but I only graduated the ninth grade. And I did go back and get a high school diploma and then I went back and took some college, so I'm not trying to give you any ideas, but that all came later.

My parents would always send us off to summer camp, and just about every summer, starting very young. Wasn't I cute? And no, that's not a toupee that I'm wearing there. Oh, or they'd send us to boarding school, because dad was so busy making money and mom was so busy with her career that we just sort of got farmed out every year. And I went to, among the 14 schools I went to, I went to military school, and here's a picture of New York military academy. Matter of fact, I went a couple years before donald trump graduated.

I just missed him. He went to the same school. And first military school I went to in California, I was five years old. Black fox military academy. And then I was in and out of schools because I was in trouble, all the time, because I think I was just looking for my parents' recognition.

I went to Jewish schools, catholic schools, many public schools. I even went to a school where there was absolutely no rules. You're thinking, "oh that would be pretty neat." School called "pinehenge." You can even find it online. It was an experimental school where they said, "you know, kids, if you just don't give them any rules, and let them find themselves, they'll learn what they need to learn and they'll really discover themselves," and I'd gotten into so much trouble that once my mom called my dad -- I'd been arrested -- and she said, "he needs to express himself, george; he needs this special school." So they sent me to the school. And they really had no rules.

You didn't have to wake up -- boarding school. Co-ed dorms. I'm telling you, this was just way out there. And there was almost no rules. The only rules -- they had three rules.

You didn't have to wake up if you didn't want to. Didn't have to go to meals. You didn't have to go to class. At the end of the year, you might not have any grades, but that was up to you. You just do what you feel like.

Three rules were: no fighting, no sex, no drugs. And nobody paid attention to the three rules. It was the most craziest thing that you could ever imagine. Well, what didn't help things was I didn't have the best examples at home. Now, because mom was in show business, you know, a lot of people in show business use drugs.

I think everybody knows that. And mom was not immune to that. Not only did she smoke cigarettes and drink, but she did other things. And I remember one time, I was 13 years old, and -- actually it was

before that -- and mom said, "doug, I know you're going to be exposed to this eventually out on the streets of New York. I'd just assume you did it at home, where I can keep you out of trouble," and she rolled a joint and smoked it with me.

And then it got to be where it was more and more frequent. And so it was pretty common: two or three times a week, mom and I would smoke pot and eat ice cream and watch tv. Or hashish. And -- now, my brother, he went to live with dad in florida because of his lung disease. When he'd come and visit, he'd say, "this isn't fair.

You won't let me smoke pot." She says, "it's bad for your lungs," but she was a loving mother, so she would make marijuana or hashish cookies for my brother. [Laughter] and one time, my brother and I took them to a school party and gave them to the teachers. [Laughter] it's true. Mom was a good cook. We said, "they're organic.

" [Laughter] so, but I was getting into lots of trouble, and you know, we're laughing now, but it was pretty sad because I grew up mostly believing in atheism. And I didn't think there was a God. And even the catholic schools I went to, they were teaching atheism, and I thought to myself, "money doesn't bring happiness. Fame doesn't bring happiness." I knew kids that were in show business that were talented, young, twice as smart as I am, could sing, could do anything. And they were so discouraged, they locked themselves in a garage, turned on the car and killed themselves.

And everybody said, "they had money, they had talent, they had looks." And they were so empty, they killed themselves. That happened to so many people that I began to think, "what's the purpose of life? Nobody's happy. Everybody's striving for something, you just die, you turn into fertilizer. Why not get it over with?" And I remember as far back as seven, I began to think, seven years old, "wonder what would be the best and fastest way to kill yourself." By the way, you know a lot of teenagers, they're the highest percentage of people that commit suicide. And more girls attempt suicide than boys.

But more boys succeed. And I don't know if that's because you know, girls maybe just take pills or something and boys like jump in front of a train. Maybe the techniques that they use. But for the girls, it may be a cry for help, but it is serious business. And I believe there's a connection between believing that you've just evolved and there is no purpose to life, and you're just gonna die and that's the end of it.

.. And suicide. That's how I felt. I thought, "why not get it over with? I'm unhappy. Kill yourself, go to sleep.

No more troubles." When I lived in New York city, I remember several times, I'd go to the roof. I often heard about people that were jumping off buildings in New York or jumping off the bridge, and I'd stand on the edge of... This building, 20 stories high, I'd put my toes over the edge, I used to play a game. And I'd try and see how far out I could lean before I felt my center of gravity. And i, it was like I was flirting with death, because I wanted to end it, but something held me back.

And you know, one of the things I know that held me back was, I thought, "what if I live through it and I'm just all smashed up?" And I thought, "I don't wanna be crippled; I want to die." I heard about people that jumped and like landed on a car and lived through it, but they're all mangled. "So I wanna make sure that when I do it, that's it." And then I knew my mother took sleeping pills, and so one day I thought, "you know" -- I was in trouble at school. Gosh, I was in trouble a lot. And you know what's really strange? One thing I want to do is I wanted to kill myself to try to get my parents' attention. It's kinda dumb though, isn't it? Because I thought, "I want to see them at my funeral.

" But I'd be dead; I wouldn't see it. And I remember I went to my mother's bedroom one time. She took sleeping pills, and I decided -- I was in trouble, she was off at some party, my brother was gone. I felt so lonely, I thought, "I just want to go to sleep and never wake up." Have you ever felt that way? "I just want to go to sleep and never wake up." And I went into the bathroom and I searched through her medicine cabinet, and I found this big bottle of pills and it didn't say "sleeping pills" on it. You know, they're not labeled that way.

It said, "valium." "Take one at bedtime." And I filled my hand with these pills, and I just got ready to swallow them and I just kept hesitating. You know what stopped me? I keep looking all over the label for where it said, "sleeping pills," and I was like 13 back then. I thought, "what if valium are lady pills for their plumbing or something? I'd just get really sick." I didn't know what it was. I thought, "that'd make things even worse," and so I postponed my suicide again that day. And then somewhere along the way, I decided, "why kill yourself by doing something boring?" I said, "why not have as much excitement--?" I saw an old beer commercial.

It said, "you only go... Around in life once. Get all the gusto you can." I was so influenced by tv, I thought, "that's the idea. Get all the gusto." I wasn't sure what that was, but I wanted it. I said, "I'm just gonna live as wild as I can and I'll die in the process.

" And I really was living that way. I was -- I started getting involved in more and more drugs now. And here's a passport picture you can see of me during that age. Yeah, i... That's me.

And I think I was 16 there, but at that point, I had already been in and out of jail for about five times. Drinking, drugs, stealing. I would steal a car, and then my buddy and I would pull up to the police and ask for directions, and we'd hope we'd get involved in like a high-speed chase. I mean, it was really crazy back then. When I was with my dad, in miami beach, he lived on this exclusive island.

I went back and forth between boarding schools, my dad, my grandparents in California. We kept getting bounced all over the place. Living with dad, he had a bar in the house. Better than some bars you'd find in a city and we could drink whenever we wanted. It was just an open room.

And he had a butler and a maid, and the butler always restocked the bar, because my dad drank a lot. My dad never knew what was missing because the butler restocked the bar. So we'd wait until he went to work and the gardener and people were out doing their things, and we'd just go mix drinks. So I started drinking at an early age and more of my friends -- by the way, I've tried all kinds of drugs, but more of my friends died from alcohol than all of the other drugs put together. But we began to get involved in crime, which was really crazy because when I was living with dad, I lived on an island with all these millionaires and their kids.

You ever heard of firestone tires? I used to date amy firestone. And you've heard of hoover vacuum cleaners? Used to play with sandy hoover, the kid that lived on the island. And I could name a lot of other people; we knew these kids. We'd get bored -- and we were probably just spoiled -- we'd get bored and we'd say, "what do you want to do?" "I don't know." "Let's go break into someone's house." We didn't need anything, but just for the thrill, we started breaking into all these millionaires' houses. Matter of fact, sometimes we'd break into each other's houses.

[Laughter] "what do you want to do?" "Oh, we broke into my house last week; let's break into your house." And we'd just dare each other. And -- no, I'm serious. It was crazy. We'd say, "see if you could..." They'd say, "someone's, it looks like they're still awake, doug. I dare ya to break in and take --" we'd just get something, just to prove that you went into the house and took something.

I wanted so much to be loved, I'd do anything just to get my friends' approval. And they'd dare me to jump off the bridge into biscayne bay. I did it. I'd do anything, just to try and get someone to like me. Well, I got into a lot of trouble and was in and out of jail several times and started running away from home.

By the time I was 15, I left home. And I hitchhiked from florida. Dad said, "I don't know what to do with you anymore," and I left florida and I went up to boston. And I started breaking into homes and stealing, stealing cars, and... I had a part-time job as a security guard.

[Laughter] that's the truth. I got a driver's license that said my date of birth is 1957, and I forged it to say, "1952." And I got a driver's license to say I was older than I was. And so here I was 16 years old now at this point, and I'm walking around boston, carrying a weapon -- I'm a security guard -- during the night, and during the day, I'm stealing from people. Because you know you walk out of someone's house with

their tv, at night, you look suspicious. But in broad daylight, they just think you're moving.

And so I started doing a lot of stealing and burglary and I met a friend who was very religious. And he was into all of these eastern religions. And he was a security guard. And he found out what I was doing for my part-time job. And I said, "are you gonna turn me in, jerry?" He said, "no doug.

Your karma's gonna get you." I said, "what's that?" He said, "oh, everything you do comes back." I said, "nah." I said, "there's no God." I said, "I stole that television set, I got rid of it: nothing happened to me." He said, "you'll find out." And a few days after he talked to me, I woke up in my apartment in boston, and my door was ajar, and I looked, and my tv was gone. And my radio. And I was so mad, I said -- I called the police right away. I wanted them to track those thieves down. And then I began to notice, that everything I did seemed to backfire.

I'd steal something, and my friends were all thieves: they'd then steal it from me. There is no honor among thieves. Or I would steal something while I was drinking, and I'd forget where I hid it. And I'd... I'd sober up and I'd forget where it was.

And then I would steal something, and like risk my life to steal a stereo or something. I specifically remember one time, I just about got killed stealing a stereo. I got back, plugged it in, I had stolen a broken stereo. Didn't even work. And I thought, "boy, this is, this can't be a coincidence.

Everything I'm doing is going wrong." I started, kept thinking about the karma thing. And what convinced me was a little thing. I didn't just quit stealing cold turkey; I tried to taper off. I used the patch. And I went to someone's house, and while they were out of the kitchen, I looked in their cupboards and I saw that they had a box of krusteaz instant pancake mix.

And it was the whole wheat variety, and I was a hippie back then, and even though I was smoking and drinking and using drugs, I only wanted whole wheat. And so I stole this box of whole wheat pancake mix, and it was stamped on the top, "\$1.19." That's back before the bar code, and it was stamped \$1.19. And so, I then got back to my place the same day, and some friends had come through my place and they'd taken my brand new jar of tang instant breakfast drink, and they drank the whole jar. And there by the empty jar was the lid sitting on the table, and it was stamped, \$1.19. And I looked at the pancake mix in my hands: \$1.

19. I looked at the lid, and I thought, "crime doesn't pay." Everything I was doing was backfiring on me. And I began to think, "there must be a God." And once I believed there was a God, I started wondering, "well, what is the true God?" Well, I wrote off Christians right away as, "ah, Christians: they're all hypocrites," you know. My mother told me, "Christians cause all the wars." And you surf through the channels, and it would say, "in ireland, the protestants are killing the catholics." They both are supposed to be Christians, and they're blowing each other up. "Ah, Christian, I don't want to be a Christian.

" And so I began to get into some of the eastern religions, like my friend jerry was into: shakdi, the Spiritual science of d.n.a. And I got into -- well, I already had some background in catholicism because I went to catholic schools. And my mother was Jewish, so I knew about that, but I wanted to get into some of these eastern religions. I got into buddhism and I got into yoga. That's where you kinda look for God by standing on your head, and all I found was my hair fell out when I did that.

[Laughter] and I traveled around the country, trying to find God. I was hitchhiking around with friends. I was trying all these different religions and mixing them all up together. When I was living in southern California on the streets, I went to a Christian mission, because they give you a free meal if you listen to them preach. And I thought, "well that's not so bad.

" And then I found out the hare krishnas also give you free food if you listen to them do their service. So a friend and I went to the hare krishna service. We were really hungry that day. And their service involved jumping up and down with the drums and the bass, for it seemed like two hours. And all they said was, "hare krishna, hare krishna, krishna krishna, hare hare.

Hare rama, hare rama, rama rama, hare hare." I never forgot it. For two hours they did that. After a while I thought, "man I'm going to the bathroom." I snuck out. When I came back, my friend Jerry, he was starting to get into it. I said, "hey man, what's wrong with you? This is just hypnosis.

" And all that jumping around -- all they gave us was yogurt and raisins. And I knew right then I wasn't joining that religion. [Laughter] so I started searching -- now, about this time, my dad came back to Boston -- I was up there -- to visit me. He said, "Doug, you gotta go back to school." He said, "you need an education." My brother was sick; he kind of wanted me to help take over the business. He said, "I found a school.

It's on a boat. Sails around the world." Matter of fact, it was two boats. And uh -- it's called Flint School abroad. And he says, "there's girls. You'll see the world.

There's scuba diving, water skiing." He said, "you gotta go back to school." So he sounded so desperate, I said, "all right." So he took me right there -- I don't know how he did it, but he got a passport for me in like 24 hours somehow. You got money, you can do it. Flew me from Boston to Milan, Italy. We drove to Genoa where the ship was parked, and he put me on this boat. I got there late.

And after he smiled and left, I found that he tricked me. This school was a very unusual, exclusive school for the children of millionaires and politicians, who were getting mixed up in various cults or drugs, to get them out of their environment, to try to insulate them against these things. And they put them on a boat and they take away your passport. And I was mad, because here I had been like an adult, and now I'm back 16 again, and I was 18. Just going around the world by myself.

It was an interesting school. We went -- sailed around the Mediterranean. Interesting thing was, this school taught atheism. And now I'm very religious. I'm in my room, I'm meditating, trying to be at one with my d.

n.a. Molecules, and everybody's making fun of me. And they're showing us films of Darwin and they were all teasing me. Well, I learned something interesting. We were sailing from northern Africa across the Mediterranean to Spain in winter, Christmas.

Middle of the winter, halfway across, we encountered a terrible winter storm. You can read about this in the Bible, they've got these storms: Acts 27. And we thought the waves were gonna swallow the ship. They were like 25, 30 feet tall. Everything was disrupted in the boat.

Things were all falling; mattresses, books, everything was everywhere. The main sail ripped. Water was coming in. Everybody was seasick. We had the pumps going.

Captain was seasick. What do you think atheists do when they think they're gonna die? It was amazing. Nobody was going, "hare Krishna, hare Krishna." [Laughter] everybody was praying, and they were making promises to God that if God would just spare them -- and you know what? They also knew what to confess. They're confessing their sins saying, "lord I'll never do it again." Instantly people knew what to change. And I was doing some praying of my own.

I wasn't going, "om." I was just calling out to God saying, "please, save us." There's no atheists, they say, in a foxhole or a storm at sea. Well, we survived the storm, and I ran away from that school during Christmas break. And now I decided I wanted to find God through nature. So, I took off. I sold everything I had to my brother who always wanted to make a good deal.

I took a bus to Virginia, and then I lost all my money drinking and playing pool. And I got out on the highway, hitchhiking. I'm wearing Florida clothing in the middle of winter, and I get stuck in Oklahoma... And it was freezing cold. And all I've got was a shirt like this and a real light windbreaker.

And I stood on the highway for hours -- I've hitchhiked all over the country -- begging for a ride. And sometimes I'd get so desperate, I'd get on my knees and beg for a ride. And you get depressed. You know, that's a lot of rejection. You stand there on an interstate, interstate 40, hour after hour.

You see people going your way. You're saying, "can you help me?" And when they go by they're saying,

"no." "Can you help me?" "No." "No, no, no, no, no." And after hours of that, and you start feeling... [Sighs] and you're freezing. Every time a truck went by I'd go, "one, two, three." Then you turn around because three seconds after the truck, the wind hits you and you got the 60 below zero wind-chill factor. And I became so desperate that I just prayed, and I really -- I had some time to pray.

And I prayed, and I asked God for four things. And I said, "lord, I know I'm a terrible person. I'm selfish and done a lot of things wrong. Hurt a lot of people." I said, "would you please give me some purpose for living?" I said, "please help me get a ride to where I'm going." I had 2,000 miles to go. I said, "please help me get some food.

" I was hungry. I lost all my money. I prayed for money, was the third thing. The fourth thing, I prayed God would give me a ride with someone normal. [Laughter] because I kept getting picked up by -- you think it's dangerous to pick up hitchhikers? I tell you: it's dangerous to hitchhike.

[Laughter] and I'd get picked up by these people that were either drunk, or -- some college students picked me up -- I was with a buddy one time -- and they were smoking so much pot that they clouded up and they couldn't see the road, and they went across the middle of the road into oncoming traffic on an interstate. [Laughter] scared us half to death. Some other drunk guy said, "oh..." He's driving highway 1 in California, where the cliffs, you know? Two lanes? He says, "I can see in the dark." He turned off his headlights to impress us. [Laughter] I said, "look at this, this is my stop right here; this redwood tree is where I was going." [Laughter] so I prayed for a ride with someone normal. As soon as I finished praying, the next vehicle stopped.

It was a white van. There was a guy in there. Young guy, about 22 years old. He picked me up. He took me 2,000 miles from Oklahoma to the door of where I was going in California.

I just prayed for a ride. He fed me all the way there. I didn't ask him to; he just offered every time we stopped. He gave me \$40 when he dropped me off. I didn't ask for it.

I also should mention I did not ask for him to preach to me all the way from Oklahoma to California. He had recently accepted Christ, and he was so excited. He was not only preaching to me. He was preaching to the gas station attendant. He was preaching to everybody all along the way.

The waitress in the restaurant. He was just in love with the Lord. And I thought, "how can this guy believe the Bible? The Bible's a fairy tale." So when he let me off, I decided, "I'm gonna find God in nature now." He let me off in palm springs. I went up to a cave I had found when I was 15 going around the country. I decided -- and this is a picture of what I looked like back then.

My brother actually came out and visited me one time at the cave. And I moved into a cave, way up in these desert mountains, and we have to go through these pretty quick. It's mount san jacinto; it's an 11,000-foot mountain in southern California. One of the highest mountains down there. I lived right where that shadow is near the bottom.

In these desert mountains, there was a creek that ran through this one canyon before it went underground by my -- matter of fact, you've heard of palm springs? The water from palm springs ran by my cave. Matter of fact, here's the view. Let me show you this just real quick. And that's what I'd see: I'd climb from palm springs up to my cave, up to the top of the hill and then I'd have to go back down to the canyon, and I had a cave right by the water. And I used to swim in the water that bob hope drank.

All the movie stars down there in palm springs. That used to give me some kind of fiendish satisfaction whenever I'd dive in the pool outside my cave. I thought, "all those millionaires down there, I want you to know I just took a bath in your springs." [Laughter] so, I don't know, that's not very nice. But -- so I moved into this cave, and that's a picture of the inside of the cave. And it was more like a big, overhanging rock.

Had a beautiful pool right outside the cave. I had a cat. He just showed up one day and lived with me for about a year and a half. Crystal clear water. His name was stranger.

It's kind of neat. He'd go down my sleeping bag, and he'd purr at the bottom of my feet before I'd go to sleep at night. It's like a little foot warmer. To wake me up, he'd push on my face. And I'd open up the sleeping bag and he'd go down there and just.

.. [Purrs] [laughter] and of course, sometimes he'd bring home a squirrel and eat it on my sleeping bag, so it wasn't all great. But here's a picture of me, I guess, when I was in the cave with stranger. I lived up there for a year and a half. At one point I got arrested and sent to New Mexico, and then I came back again.

But... I never wore any clothes. I was trying to find God through nature. I'd hike down to palm springs once or twice a week, and I would panhandle, or I'd dig in the dumpster for food. I was too proud to ask my father for any help.

By the way, first time I saw friends digging in the dumpster, it was revolting to me. But I kept hanging around those people, and pretty soon you can get used to anything. Gotta pick your friends carefully. My dad found out -- he had worked so hard to take care of us and provide for us. When he found out from my grandfather I was getting food out of the garbage can, it broke his heart.

And I've often thought, "I wonder how our Heavenly Father feels when, instead of going to Jesus for happiness, we go to the dumpster of the devil." Well, the miracle I didn't tell you is when I moved into this cave up there in the mountains, there was a Bible in the cave someone had left there. Someone asked me one time, "was it a gideon Bible? Did the gideons put it there?" I always thought that was very funny. They figured hotel rooms and caves, everywhere. [Laughter] and -- but it was a king James version. And it was there for a while, but eventually I thought -- I kept running into Christians and they always seemed so carbonated and -- "oh, do you know the Lord? Have you been saved? Are you sanctified?" And I thought, "what in the world are they talking about?" And I felt ignorant because I'd never really read the Bible.

So one day I decided, "I'm gonna read the Bible so I can argue with these Christians." Well, I'll tell you: it's a powerful book. I started reading; I got bogged down in the old testament and a friend said, "you gotta go to the new testament." So everyday I used to make banana bread, because I'd get the day-old bananas, and I made my own bread in an oven I'd built on the fire. I'd eat banana bread and I'd read the Bible. Had a lot of time; I was a hermit. I'd go days -- you ever go five days without seeing another human being? I'd go days without seeing anybody.

No voice, no tv, no cell phone, no nobody. I couldn't get along with anyone. I didn't think anyone cared about me. I just wanted to run away. And after I got through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then I was faced with that dilemma that c.

s. Lewis talks about. Jesus is -- I thought, "he really lived. He was either a liar or he was a lunatic, or he was God become man. He was the Lord.

" And you know, I'd tried everything else. I thought, "what have I got to lose?" So up there in the cave one time, I thought -- I felt silly doing it because I didn't really even know how to pray. Got on my knees; I'd read enough of the Bible to get an idea of how it works and... I said, "lord, I'm a big zero, and if you have any purpose for my life, would you please help me?" Now, you gotta just get the picture. I mean, here I am -- I'm running around naked up in the mountains, with a beard and long hair, stealing and cursing, using drugs, drinking, lying.

I was very religious, but was very lost, living immorally. And I said, "lord, would you forgive my sins" -- I was 17 years old -- "and give me some purpose for living?" And you know, I didn't see a flash of lightening, but everything changed that day. All of a sudden, I felt this peace come into my heart, and I just knew it was true. And I began to read the Bible and tried the things that were in it, and it was incredible. I remember one time I was down with a friend on the street and I said, "hey, I just prayed -- I read in the Bible that if we pray and ask for food that God'll feed us.

" And we had no food. And so I said, "let's play and let's pray" -- I played the flute and panhandled -- "and let's see if we can get \$4.00. He said, "you're crazy." I said, "oh, let's try it." And we prayed, and we started playing, and the first lady came by and said, "oh, today's my son's birthday, here's \$4.00." And things like that kept happening. One time I went to a restaurant with no food, and I prayed and said, "lord, I'm hungry, but I have no money." The waitress comes up and says, "what do you want to order?" I said, "I have no money." She said, "I'll buy your food today." I mean, I just -- all these things, I think God did that for me then so I'd know how real he is. And you know, from that point to this point, it's just been.

.. It's been a tornado of adventure. And I want you to know the Christian life is an abundant life. God has opened the way now. The more I travel around the world and I tell people about how he's changed my life and how he can change your life.

.. How he has a big plan for every one of you. Would you like to know what God's will is for your life? The number one step to knowing what God's will is for your life is, are you willing to do his will? When you surrender your life into his hands, then he'll reveal his will. Well, you know, my father passed away; my mom passed away. I was with my brother when he passed away.

They had all the money and the fame and I remember talking to falcon just before he stopped breathing. And he used to tease me whenever I prayed, because of my religion. He'd argue with me. I said, "falcon, would you let me pray with you?" And he squeezed my hand and he asked me, "please pray." And you don't know how different that was for him. And so I was able to pray with my brother, and I hope, I hope that I see him in the Kingdom.

You know, it's exhibit "a" that -- happiness does not come from fame. It doesn't come from fortune. It doesn't come from the world. The only happiness comes from your creator who loves you so much that he died to save you. And as we close this meeting right now, I'd just like to ask you, and even those who may be watching.

.. Do you know what God's will is for your life? I'll tell you: it's to surrender and trust your lives to Jesus. Would you like to do that now? Before we close, I'd just like to pray with each one of you. Father in Heaven, thank you for your love. Thank you for sending Jesus.

Thank you for your patience and your persistence to save us. Be with each of these young people. And I pray that you'll forgive their sins and reveal yourself to them. In Christ's name we ask, amen. Thank you for watching this episode.