

# The subjective theory of truth religion essay



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According to the correspondence theory, "if a statement corresponds to reality then it is considered to be truth" (Hardy 32). Because there are three other truth theories, many have the wrong idea regarding what truth is and how one can know it. The three other truth theories are pragmatic, coherence, and subjective, and through the use of reason, one can determine which one is the most logical.

To start, the subjective theory of truth discerns that "the individual decides what is true and false based merely on his own personal desires." In other words, there is no such thing as absolute truth and what is "true for you might not be true for me" (Hardy 38). Absolute truth is simply the concept that there is a universal truth or "a set of truths" that exist and concern everyone (Hardy 40). In 2001, a study was done to determine how many Americans actually believe in absolute truth, and the result was only 38% (B. A. Robinson). Therefore 62% of Americans believe relativism in regards to reality, ethics, and even pluralism. However, behind every subjective truth, there is at least one absolute truth that can be discerned (Hardy 40). In any given situation, opinions can form, but there has to be at least one essential truth in order for those opinions to appear. For example, if there is a car accident and witnesses must tell their versions of what occurred, each person might retell the events that caused the accident a little bit differently. However, the one underlying absolute truth is that the accident did occur.

In regards to moral relativism, in order for someone to say that something is good or evil, or, right or wrong, then he or she has to make an absolute truth claim. Under what standard is something immoral? If truth is relative, then one can follow their own standards and desires in regards to morality and

there is no reason to argue at all. The moral implications of relativism also allude to placing the individual above God and rejecting His sovereignty. Furthermore, one can not say that someone is wrong unless that person knows what right is (Hardy, 40-41).

According to Stand Your Ground by Dean Hardy, " the irony of relativism is that it is completely self-defeating. Relativism cannot even pass its own test for truth" (Hardy 40). In regards to the material reality, there are many ways to logically prove the subjective theory false. For example if someone declares that truth is relative, all one has to do in reply is question whether or not that is an absolute truth (Hardy 41). Therefore, it is evident that all truth claims are not inclusive. Truth must be " exclusive, absolute and narrow," for an attempt to include everyone will never work (Hardy 40-41). Truth is also trans-cultural, and it is discovered not invented. Also, just because someone believes in something with all of his heart and deepest convictions, that doesn't make his belief true. This leads us into the discussion of pluralism and how all religions can not be true (Hardy 41).

Pluralists argue in the analogy of the six blind men and the elephant that all six major religions have a piece of the truth but are unable to see the big picture. According to this way of thinking, if all six religions have a piece of the truth then they are all true. However, in making this claim, the pluralist has to know the whole truth. Underneath all of the subjective truths, there is still one elephant that represents absolute truth: that there is one true religion. Therefore, in using this analogy, pluralists claim the opposite of what they teach: that there has to be only one spiritual and religious path. If one is to discern whether or not pluralism is true based on a logical

standpoint, then one can show that all six major religions teach opposites. In Christianity, for example, salvation is achieved by faith alone in Christ alone. However in Hinduism, one achieves salvation by overcoming reincarnation with good works. The two can't both be true (Hardy 39).

### **Should we be skeptical about everything?**

Lord Byron once said " In short, I deny nothing, but doubt everything." The question of whether or not reality is an illusion certainly harps at the hearts of many. The ideologies of skepticism, idealism and realism present ways to answer the question of metaphysics and how one knows what is truly real. We should most definitely not be skeptical about everything, for it is evident that there is both a material and spiritual reality.

There is most definitely a difference between the physical existence of a chair in the outside world and the immaterial existence of a chair inside one's mind. The two both share the same " essence," for they both have legs, a back and a seat for one to sit on. However, the two differ with existence, for one is physically real and the other is not (Hardy 17). In this situation, an idealist would believe that the only real chair would be the chair fabricated in his mind. Therefore, the idea of the chair is more real than the chair itself. A skeptic, however, would simply doubt the ability to prove that a chair existed at all. According to the skeptic, one's senses are faulty (Hardy 18).

Because I am a realist, I firmly believe that the computer I used to type this paper is real and so are the ideas that I have formulated in my mind. Even though one can not prove everything with 100% certainty, it is still probable

that anything can still exist as real. For example, one can't prove with 100% certainty that Christianity is real (Hardy 3). Although there are logical conclusions and arguments to prove Christianity to be true, there is always room for faith. One can not go back in time and physically prove that Jesus existed, and this is why there is room for faith (Hardy 3). However, one can know anything with 100% certainty. In regards to mathematics, one can know that the equation  $2+2$  will always equal 4. This is real and one can know it for certain (Hardy 15-16). Dean Hardy states in Stand Your Ground that " if we could not be sure if our statements and ideas correspond to a real thing, then there could be no such thing as truth or knowledge" (Hardy 19). So even though it is in our human nature to doubt things, such as Lord Byron did in the statement above, that doesn't mean that no knowledge is absolute or that, nothing is real.

## **I don't think that there is a God, is there any proof that He exists?**

There are three main arguments that are used to prove God's existence. They are the cosmological, teleological and moral arguments. Each argument starts with certain presuppositions and then leads one into understanding that there must be an infinite God who exists outside of the universe. My favorite is the teleological argument because it proves that there must be a God based on the knowledge that the universe is intelligently designed. The logical syllogism is as follows: " Everything that has design has a designer. The universe has design; therefore the universe must have a Designer" (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20). In using the rules of logic and argumentation found in Stand Your Ground, this

is a categorical syllogism where the conclusion of the argument is both true and valid (Hardy 57-60).

To start, there are many ways to prove that the universe has design. One of the most famous illustrations of this utilizes the concept of a watch and a watchmaker. In reality, a watch is comprised of natural elements from the universe. However, a watch has never just randomly formed out in nature. Even if one were to line up all of the essential parts of the watch together outside, one would know that the only way a watch could function is if someone intelligently constructed its parts together, and nature can't do that! Therefore it is safe to say that "nature randomizes and intelligence organizes" (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20). In addition, many use the study of the anthropic principle to further conclude that the universe must have a designer. The anthropic principle mandates that our universe is designed so that even subtle changes in its atmosphere, oxygen or carbon dioxide levels would cause drastic results. One such example is that the oxygen level must comprise approximately 21% our atmosphere. If it was only 15% all life would suffocate and if it was 25% all life would burn (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20). Also, never before has a scientist been able to construct a living cell, for it contains nearly 1,000 volumes of encyclopedic information (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20)! Furthermore, the concept of specified complexity serves to prove that chance can not order the universe. In Apologetics class, the example of a group of monkeys typing a work of Shakespeare proves this point, for although they were given long periods of time to sit in front of a computer screen with a work of Shakespeare beside them, none of them

were able to type a complete work. This proves that time added to chance will not equal order or even design. The point of this serves to prove that the chance of the universe creating itself is not only illogical but completely unsound (Hardy 90-91). In order to prove that the Designer from the teleological argument is the God of Christianity, the other three arguments need to be used to correspond with the Bible's teachings (Hardy 100).

### **Is the Bible merely mythical stories?**

Many unbelievers feel that the Bible is a book of mythical stories and that its teachings are ultimately false and insubstantial. However, even though I agree to some extent that the Bible includes both literal and figurative stories, I would still argue that the Bible is inspired or " God-breathed" (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 3). As 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 states, " All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

First and foremost, the Bible is a historical book, which can be verified by past secular historical events. For example, the New Testament book Acts and the Old Testament books of Joshua, Ruth, Chronicles and 1st and 2nd Kings (just to name a few) are all deemed historical books and pertain to actual events that occurred in the past. Therefore, the whole Bible can not be deemed mythological (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 4).

In addition, there are many non-Christian sources that can be used to verify the teachings of the Bible as accurate in correlation to events in history (Hardy 114). According to Stand Your Ground by Dean Hardy, there are more

non-Christian sources that promote Christ's existence than there are sources that discuss the existence of Emperor Tiberius Caesar Augustus during the 1st century (Hardy 117). Notable men including Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonis, the Roman governor Pliny the Younger and Jewish historian Josephus have all written accounts about the existence of not only Christ but also the truth to a lot of historical claims in the Bible (Hardy 116-118).

Also, one of my favorite books of the Old Testament, Psalms, contains poetry. Even though one might argue that this book is mythological, I would refer back to how many of the verses in Psalms predict prophecy. For example, Psalm 22 predicts the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, how He was mocked on the cross and how many tempted Him to show that He was the one and only true God (Henson, Judaism 16). Above, I mentioned how many of the secular accounts confirming Christ's existence give mention to His death under Pontius Pilate and His resurrection (Hardy 116-118). The statement above proves that the Bible is internally consistent, something that could not just be a compilation of random mythological stories.

Lastly, to those who argue that " the flood was a foolish myth," and that God " did not start the first woman with a rib," Jesus Christ confirmed the validity of these events in the verses of Matthew 24: 38 and Matthew 19: 4-5 (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology, 3). In addition, it is very bold for one to claim that all " 66 books of the Bible, written by 40 different authors, on 3 different continents in 3 different languages over a period of 1500 years," is completely mythical (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology, 4). Therefore, I believe that the book of the Bible is not a compilation of mythical stories.

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## **5. Why must God be an infinite being? Why can't there be multiple Gods, and why can't God be limited?**

The common definition of the word infinite is "having no limits (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 7)." However, a more appropriate definition when describing God's characteristics of omnipotence, omnibenevolence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternalness and immutableness is "unlimited perfection (Hardy 75)." God must be an infinite being because He is uncaused and outside of the universe. Because God is uncaused, nothing is causing Him to be and therefore He simply "is who He is," or, He is pure actuality (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 7). If nothing is limiting God then God must be infinite and unable to lack (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 7).

However, the concepts of deism, maltheism, and finite Godism support the notion that God is a finite being, or a being that is "limited in perfection (Hardy 75)" If God is a finite being, then something had to cause Him to be, and if God had a cause, then He can't be God. Therefore it is safe to say that one would have to regress back in time to find an infinite being, which would then be called God (Hardy 96-97). Deists claim that God created the world and everything in it, but then decided to let the world just run on its own. This implies that God is not omnipotent, for He lacks the ability to perform miracles, and that God is not omnibenevolent, for He lacks the ability to love and care for His creation (Hardy 78). In addition, Maltheists claim that God is evil, but if He is omnibenevolent, He doesn't have the potential to be evil. For God does not have the potential to be anything other than who He is, and that is an all-loving, good being (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology

7). Lastly, finite Godists project the notion that God lacks and through the reason I've given above, it is impossible for God to lack or else He'd be finite.

In addition to God's inability to lack, Polytheists argue that there are many finite Gods that rule the universe. However, it is true that something is distinguished by what it lacks rather than what it has. In order to distinguish these lesser gods apart, one would have to lack something the other god didn't have, and vice versa (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 7). If something lacks, then that something had a cause and therefore can not be the infinite God of the universe (Hardy 80).

## **How do you know that the infinite being you believe in is the God of the Bible?**

According to Psalm 145: 3, " Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom." There are many verses in the Bible that prove the infinite being who created the universe must be the God of Christianity. As mentioned before, God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient, omnipresent, and immutable. He is also holy, relational, just, and righteous (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 8-9).

To start, verse Matthew 19: 26 states, " Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" This verse shows how God is an all powerful being, something that man could never be. Also, one can see God's love for man in Romans 5: 8, which states " But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The Lord sent down His only son so that our sins could be forgiven and that we could have eternal life if we choose to come to know

Him. Next, Psalm 139: 1-2 states, " O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar." This shows how God is all knowing. In addition, God's omnipresence can be shown thorough verse Jeremiah 23: 24 where the Lord questions, "'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him... do not I fill heaven and earth?'" Lastly, the God of Christianity is immutable, which means that He is unable to change (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 8). In Malachi 3: 6, the Lord states, " I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." These are just a few examples that describe how the God of the universe must be the God of Christianity.

## **7. If there is a God and He is omnipotent, omni benevolent, and omniscient, why is there evil? I mean, if He created everything, then didn't create evil?**

In order to understand this question, one should reference the beginning of Genesis when the Lord created both Adam and Eve. Genesis 2: 16-17 states " And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" Here, the Lord gave Adam an ultimatum. He gave him the choice to obey or disobey and He later gave the same choice to Eve. Adam and Eve were created without original sin and therefore were perfect in the eyes of God. However, the Lord gave man the free will to commit sin by choosing evil. In the story of Genesis, the serpent was the tempter. He told Eve in Genesis 3: 5 that "...God knows that when you eat of it you eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing

good and evil." So now after reading this verse, the question becomes whether or not God created evil and if He did, why He created it.

God did not create evil. However, God created a perfect world where only good existed, but because He gave man free will, evil came into the world (Hardy 106). When people think of evil, many think of tragedies, times of adversity, even murder, however, they do forget that evil is the lack of something, or as Thomas Aquinas called it, the "privation of a thing (Hardy 106)." Evil is the lack of anything good. In *Stand Your Ground* by Dean Hardy, the example of a bucket with a hole in it is considered to be evil for its opening causes it to lack (Hardy 106). When God created the world, He essentially had two choices: one was to create a world where everyone was forced to be obedient to Him and the other was to give all of man kind the option to worship Him or not (Hardy 107-108).

To further explain, the fall of man, which was the result of Adam and Eve's first sin, enabled us to distinguish good from evil by the standard which God created. One can use empiricism to deduce that the world we live in is full of suffering, disease, pain, wrath, and heartache (just to name a few.) However, in order to understand why an omnibenevolent, omnipotent, omniscient God would allow these things to enter the once perfect world, one has to understand the importance of Satan and Satan's desires. In Mr. Henson's Christian Theology class I learned that "Satan uses humans to accomplish his purposes, but God uses demons to accomplish His purposes (Henson, *Introduction to Christian Theology*, 14)." In all honesty, if there wasn't suffering and evil in the world, would we ever choose to pursue an all-loving God? Wouldn't you rather want to have the choice to pursue good or evil in <https://assignbuster.com/the-subjective-theory-of-truth-religion-essay/>

this life, and learn from your experiences in times of suffering? Furthermore, don't we need to know what evil is in order to comprehend that an all-loving, just God even exists? I firmly believe that God hurts when He sees His creation suffering but don't those times of suffering bring us closer to Him? God allowed evil to enter the world so that His creation can come to know Him and pursue Him in a world full of darkness.

### **The only possible explanation of our existence is natural selection.**

In response to this statement, natural selection is only one idea or concept regarding our existence in the universe. Another idea happens to be the concept of intelligent design as it pertains to the universe's complexity. Debaters are in constant disagreement over the two and the argument is still extremely prevalent in today's society. However, in studying the concept of irreducible complexity, one can prove that evolutionism is false. The most famous evolutionist, Charles Darwin, even stated something along the lines of if irreducible complexity were to be proven true then evolution can't be (Hardy, Chapter 7 Notes).

The concept of irreducible complexity, which was formulated by Michael Behe, goes hand in hand with the teleological argument to prove God's existence. The human cell is a complex structure made up of interdependent parts (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20). If even one of these parts were to be removed, the cell would cease to function. This disproves the concept of macro-evolution or the idea that minor changes over time have enabled drastic changes to occur in a given species (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 21). In Apologetics class I learned about

another example regarding irreducible complexity: the human eye. In order for the human eye to function, all of its interacting parts must exist together. One can not claim to have 25% of an eye, because that absolutely makes no sense! Gradual changes over time could not have occurred because all of that organ's parts would have had to have formed at the same time. In addition, another one of Darwin's theories is gradualism or the notion that new traits form in the DNA code. However, scientist Gregor Mendel confirmed that our genetic make-up is hereditary or produced by the pre-existing traits of our parents (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 20). Lastly, the concept of microevolution can even be used to support the existence of God. According to Mr. Henson, " a wise Creator would create flexibility within the gene pool to enable survival under any given environment, and to show His artistic creativity. This shows preplanning and purpose, which implies design (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 21)."

### **What makes Jesus so different? What did He say that was so unique?**

Verse John 1: 35 states "... John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'" Here one can fully understand the importance of Christ's sacrifice for humankind and how He was more than just a man. Jesus Christ is the epitome of the new covenant God established with His people in the New Testament. Because Christ died for us, our sins can be forgiven. He essentially is the " propitiation for our sins, meaning took our punishment for sin" (Henson, Christian Theology 3).

In the New Testament, Jesus performed miracles, He was worshipped, He forgave sins, He answered prayers, and although He was a man, He was without sin. Here one can see Jesus' divine nature when He lived (Henson, Christian Theology 15). An example of Christ performing miracles is seen in Mark 1: 25-26, which reveals: "'Be quiet!' said Jesus sternly. 'Come out of him!' The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek." An example of Christ exclaiming how He is the Son of God is seen in John 14: 6 where " Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" An example of Christ forgiving one's sins can be seen in Luke 7: 48 which remarks, " Then Jesus said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'" In reference to prayer Jesus tells His disciples in Matthew 6: 6, "'But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you.'" These all show how Jesus was a Divine Teacher who brought people to pursue the unseen God.

In response to those who believe that Jesus did not claim to be God but only His son, in verse John 10: 30 Jesus remarks " I and the Father are one." Throughout His life on earth, it is recorded that Christ spoke many things and was more than just a " good" man.

### **Why do Christians believe that there are three Gods in one? Isn't this Polytheism?**

The concept of the Trinity holds that there are three persons in one God. The reason why Christians believe that there are three persons in one God is because God is a relational being. In using the moral argument, one can deduce that the Moral Law Giver (the God of Christianity) has to be moral

and relational because not only is He the standard for right and wrong but the concept of morality without relationships does not make sense (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 18). For example, one can not lie to a rock or some non-living creature. If one were to slap his desk or slap his little sister, which one would you consider morally wrong? Relationships are necessary in order for morals to exist. With that being said, If God is eternal, then He must be in an eternal relationship, which shows how God is not "dependent on His temporal creation," for that would put limits on Him (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 18). Furthermore, if God is in an eternal relationship then He must be multi-personal, for He is the only true, infinite God. The reason why relationships are so valuable for human beings is because we were created in the image of God (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 18).

To further explain the concept of the Trinity, within God there is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All three "are of the same substance" and are not separate from each other. John 1: 1-2 states " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." The emphasis of " Word" in the above verse serves to emphasize how the Christ is God and was always God from the beginning of time.

The reason why the concept of the Trinity is not polytheism is because even though the three persons within God are equal, they are " economically distinct," which means that they serve different functions. The Father created the Earth, He is in charge over everything, while the Son is the " mediator between God and man" and lastly, the Holy Spirit convicts man of

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sin and immorality through guilt and shame (Henson, Introduction to Christian Theology 21).

## **What does a person have to do to become a Christian? Why is it necessary? Couldn't you just be " good" and get into heaven?**

The infamous statement found in Ephesians 2: 8-9 entails " For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." Here it is evident that Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man and through His sacrifice, humankind can come to salvation if they choose to worship Him. In order to become a Christian, one has to fully accept Christ as God's Son and by worshipping Him, one can reap eternal life.

In addition, in order for one to truly know God and believe in Christ as the Savior of humankind, one has to live a life devoted to God. This means, that one can not just sin on Monday and repent on Sunday in Church and claim himself a Christian. Christians need to put forth an initiative to shy away from sin and learn to live a life here on Earth devoted to God. Even though Ephesians 2: 8-9 states that " it is not by works," I believe that if one truly knows God then those works will evidence in his life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In my opinion, the above question as to whether or not " good" people can get into heaven without believing in Christ is a conundrum. For can anyone truly be good if the Holy Spirit is not working miracles inside of them? Can anyone truly be good if they do not know God, or if they do not claim Christ as their Savior? It is evident that because God is omnibenevolent, His

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creation can not even try to be " good" without having God working somehow miraculously in their lives. Believing in Christ is an essential for salvation, but because I am a Catholic, I believe that good works are a direct byproduct of faith in Christ and that for one to be " good," God has to be inside of them.

### **Where are you at in your spiritual journey?**

When I was 12 years old, I lost my aunt to breast cancer and due to a family disagreement, I also lost my " favorite" cousins. I had just graduated from 5th grade and I just couldn't understand why JoAnne and Gerard were no longer a part of my life. As I type this, I can remember all of the times we shared: spontaneous sleepovers, watching the fireworks show that they put on every Fourth of July, every single Christmas Eve that I can remember, all of the " tickle wars" that I never seemed to win, and the times when we would swim all day in their backyard pool. I never knew what it was like to lose someone you truly loved and cared for with all of your heart or what it would be like to never see them or hear from them again. I lost my two role-models, the people that I looked up to and could never wait to visit.

However, even through this painful experience, I've never shut God out of my life completely. Through the hard years, I always prayed to God to not only help me understand why this was happening but also for my cousins that I no longer knew. This experience never brought me really close to God, it kind of kept me at bay even though I never completely shut Him out of my life.

However while I tried to block this experience from my mind and move on, adversity entered my life in a completely, different unexpected way. The first

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day of my sophomore year of high school, my mother had a stroke, and from this experience I learned how important my family was in my life. From this point on, I feel as though my faith has grown tremendously, not only because I've grown in a Christian environment but because God used these experiences to help me come to know Him. Even though I can't really explain how, I know that God works in mysterious ways, especially in my life and He has so many things planned for me. The experience with my mom shocked our family and made us realize that we were ignoring God for earthly desires. When all of this was happening, I completely detested ever going to Charlotte Christian, but I know that God made everything happen the way it did because it has made me a stronger woman in my faith and personal journey with the Lord.

Even now, these past few months, I've been trying to have a new relationship with my cousins but because all of this time has passed, I don't even know where to start. I pray to God every night about how I can know them again, even though I know it won't ever be the same. Right now a lot of change is going to happen for me and even though it has been hard I honestly have put all of my faith in knowing that God knows what's best for me. I'm reading a book called "God Always has a Plan B," and it has just been helping me get through college rejections and acceptances. I have no idea where I am going to end up, but I know that God has definitely made it clear where He does not want me to go.

I have completely accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and I try every day to live according to God's plan. I know that I'm not perfect and I have many faults, but I know that God sees my strengths and talents for I'm created in

His image. After having the opportunity to take classes such as Christian Theology and Apologetics, I feel as though my faith has been challenged and I'm glad that I am able to question and not be afraid. I have had doubts enter my mind of course, but they have just served to make my faith stronger. I don't know where I would be today if I didn't have God actively working my life. I don't understand how some people can live everyday and not feel like there's something out there that's greater than we could ever be. As one chapter in my life comes to an end, I know that my spiritual journey will continue to become a larger part of me.

Even though I have had painful experiences, God has blessed me with the ability to ch