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## Bristol Head - Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 13TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

### Bristol Head - Men At The Cross Devotional

*Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White*

#### 1 Corinthians 10:13

*"13No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."*

#### VIDEO OF THE DAY

A rattlesnake's rattle is symbolic of the many warnings in nature. But there are also manmade warnings all around us. Weather reports are a good example of warnings we encounter every day. Sometimes we disregard them at great peril.

[images/Blog Images/show/uj98](#)

Story has it that in Lake City, Colorado, a party of snowmobilers ignored the winter storm alert being broadcast over the radio in the café where they were enjoying lunch. An hour later they were high atop Bristol Head, groping along in a whiteout, when suddenly the ground fell out from under them. Days later a rescue team found them at the base of the 1000-foot cliff, their bodies shattered beyond recognition. Because of the blinding snow, they had missed the sign that warned of the dangerous cliff. It is impossible for one to pass that landmark without thinking of the terror that must have been theirs during that

brief plummet to earth.

[images/Blog Images/show/uj9a](#) I Corinthians 10:13 contains both comfort and caution. When I read it, I am reminded that the temptations I face are not uncommon. In fact, other Christians face them, too. However, in spite of this comfort, the verse leaves no room for me to act recklessly. Temptation may be common, but it can still lead to a disastrous fall if I yield to it. God in His graciousness provides a "way of escape." But many is the imprisoned boy or the impregnated girl who says, "God must not really care for me. When I was tempted, He didn't provide me with a way of escape. Now look at the mess I'm in." Yet, if they search their memory they will always find that there was a sign, a neon sign that read:

**"DANGEROUS CLIFF AHEAD. IN CASE OF HEAVY SNOWFALL, DO NOT PROCEED BEYOND THIS POINT."**

[images/Blog Images/show/uj99](#) Had the snowmobilers heeded the weather report in the first place, they would never have been up on Bristol Head. But because they ignored the report, they got trapped in the whiteout. And because of the whiteout, they missed the important trail sign. And because they missed the important trail sign, they sailed over the cliff. And because they sailed over the cliff, their lives were cut short tragically. Oh, how I wish teenagers would see that temptation and the tragedies that result from it are just like that tragedy on Bristol Head. When we ignore the initial "way of escape" God provides for us, our vision becomes so impaired that it is increasingly difficult to find our way back to safety.

My friends watch for the signs today. And when you see one, don't just read it and roar past it . . . *heed* it and soar successfully through life.

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Is it comforting to you to know that "no temptation has overtaken, but such as is common to man?" If so, why is this comforting?
2. Discuss a time when you recognized a "way of escape", yet refused to heed it. What were the results?

### **LIFELINE:**

God will always provide a path of escape. This means we must be so "in tune" with Him

that we don't miss the path.

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## Decks - Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 11TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

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*Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White*

**1 Corinthians 9:19-27**

*"19Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win*

*those under the law. 21To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. 23I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. 24Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."*

## **VIDEO OF THE DAY**

It was brought to my attention this summer that some of my staff had gotten creative in their quest to keep in shape.

"They're doing decks," my source told me. The word <images/Blog Images/show/uj88> "deck" sounded ominous until it was explained. It seems that two (or more) guys, eager to pump up their pectorals, can go through a deck of cards and get a pretty good workout if they match the number of each card with the same number of push-ups. Depending on the luck of the draw, one participant can end up doing a whole lot more push-ups than the other guy.

You ought to see some of my counselors go at it. Talk about a passion for winning. The other day I watched two counselors go head to head. When it was all said and done, one had sixteen more push-ups than his partner. Not to be outdone, the guy who was behind did seventeen more. In turn, his pal added an extra two to put himself over the top. It continued like that until both of them fell exhausted in a pool of their own sweat.

That is the same kind of tenacity Paul was expressing when he used the phrase "that I might win" five times in a span of four verses. What was he trying to win? He was trying to win souls. And whose souls was he trying to win? Any one soul who had a pulse. Paul placed evangelism over every other aspect of life. He even set aside his own rights when it meant the salvation of another human being.

<images/Blog Images/show/uj89>

Verses 26 and 27 indicate that Paul had a plan, a "workout regimen", that would help him achieve his

spiritual goals. He knew that in the game of life there were no ties, there were only wins and losses. Because he could not bear the thought of a neighbor losing his soul to the devil, he was always willing to go the extra mile, do the "extra push-up" for the sake of those who were lost. That's why he worked hard . . . prayed hard . . . studied hard . . . preached hard . . . traveled hard . . . loved hard . . . and trained hard.

Nike puts it well. "What are you training for?"

**QUESTIONS:**

1. So, what are you training for?
2. Do you have a spiritual workout schedule? If so, describe it.

**LIFELINE:**

Paul was passionate and disciplined when it came to sharing the gospel. Discuss something in your life about which you are extremely passionate and disciplined. What are you diligently working towards? What is your goal?

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# Pope Ponders Great Figures In New Book

JULY 08TH 2011 BY NEWS

## Pope Ponders Great Figures In New Book

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. - Fortress Press announced the release of *Great Christian Thinkers: From the Early Church Through the Middle Ages* by Pope Benedict XVI.

In brief portraits, Pope Benedict XVI offers engaging, perceptive, and edifying sketches of some of the great thinkers and writers of Christianity. Pope Benedict discusses notable theologians from East and West but also many figures whose primary witness was as ascetics, poets, mystics, and missionaries. His pieces are not only illuminating historical sketches but also often surprisingly personal reflective meditations on the perennial changes of theology, spirituality, devotion, and corporate religious life—in short, of thinking about and wrestling daily with the mysteries that envelop all our lives and struggles.

Always with an eye to their deepest religious convictions and struggles, the Holy Father presents these great thinkers' importance for the church and for Christian life today.

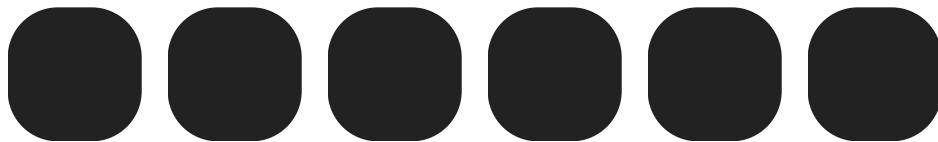
*"Taken from Pope Benedict's addresses to public audiences Great Christian Thinkers is an accessible treasure-trove of reflections of some of the most significant thinkers and writers of Christianity—70 in all. The contents are divided into four parts: Part 1—Heirs of the Apostles. Part 2—Great Teachers of the Ancient Church. Part 3—Monks and Missionaries. Part 4—Mystics, Mendicants, and Scholastics. An excellent resource for the classroom, personal reading, and small group discussion."*

—The National Federated Priests Council

Pope Benedict XVI was, as Joseph Ratzinger, already a distinguished theologian and professor of theology at the Universities of Münster, Tübingen, and Regensburg and author of more than seventy-five books in biblical, historical, and theological aspects of Christianity before his election as pope in 2005.

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## Know It All - Men At The Cross Devotional

JULY 08TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

[Know It All - Men At The Cross Devotional](#)

*Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White*

**1 Corinthians 8:1-3**

*"1Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. 3But the man who loves God is known by God"*

### VIDEO OF THE DAY

Just when I think I know everything, someone asks me a question I can't answer. Here's

one that humbled me recently:

"What is uglier than the devil, more beautiful than God, possessed by the poor, and desired by the rich?"

If you said "nothing", then you are smarter than I.

Sometimes on the ladder of knowledge, a man must be <images/Blog Images/show/uj6p> knocked down a step or two for him to realize how little he truly knows. The universe is a vast vault of secrets still undiscovered by the world's greatest thinkers.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that "know-it-alls" are like party balloons, all puffed up and full of themselves. Yet it only takes one simple question, one tiny pin-prick for someone's pride to be popped. Then everyone can see him as he truly is -- an empty windbag.

<images/Blog Images/show/uj6n> Paul further shares that loving God is more important than any amount of knowledge. "Love builds up."

Knowledge can make you look good to others. Knowledge can make you feel good that others look up to you. This is a false sense of security. As we begin to believe we "know-it-all", we develop an arrogant attitude full of self-pride. Usually those with strong personalities and opinions have a hard time learning from others and listening to God.

We must crucify that sinful mindset. Love is more important than worldly knowledge. It is the way to grasp God's knowledge. We must love him and show his love to others. Be compassionate and loving to others. You will gain more ground with an attitude of love than with an attitude of knowing-it-all.

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Knowledge can be both a blessing and a curse. Give examples of each.
2. Have you ever been a "know-it-all"? If so, what were the results?

## **LIFELINE:**

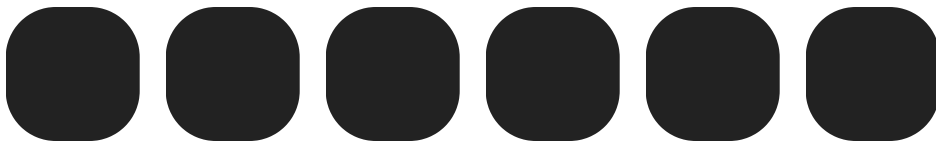
Recognize today that your knowledge, though it may be great, is like a grain of sand on the shore of all knowledge.



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## Fiery Love - Men at the Cross Daily

JULY 07TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

[Fiery Love - Men at the Cross Daily](#)

*Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White*

**1 Corinthians 7: 2, 9**

*"2But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 9But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion"*

**VIDEO OF THE DAY**

A fire can be friend or foe.

Most of us have experienced a fire in the dead of winter. When all is withered and white outside, the hearth inside is toasty and warm. Others might recall a crackling campfire with close friends drawn around it, sharing stories and a bag of marshmallows.

But then there is the other kind of fire-the kind that rages out of control, the kind that nobody likes to remember. The terrible Chicago fire ... the explosion of the Hindenburg ... the death of a child playing too close to the furnace. The only good thing about this kind of fire is that it reminds us of an eternal concept: every perfect gift of God can go awry if not managed properly.

One such gift-the gift of sex-was intended by God to be <images/Blog Images/show/uj6d> the fiery fulfillment of monogamous marriage. It warms ... it sparks ... and yes, at times it even protects a husband and wife from the lusts of this world. As a Christian who feels called by God to minister to the youth of planet Earth, I am intrigued by the analogy of fire and human sexuality. It helps me explain why the God who made it is the same God who says "avoid it until you're married". You see, every good fire requires three elements: fuel, oxygen and spark. Any one of these in inadequate amounts decreases the possibility of combustion. If we think of "the spark" as one's hormones, and "the oxygen" as one's environment, and "the fuel" as one's emotions, then we can understand the Maker's mentality when He warns us not to "play with matches".

Let me briefly touch on "the fuel" of sexual relationship.

<images/Blog Images/show/uj6e> One particular fuel (or emotion) that can create intense heat in pre-marital relationships is the feeling of fear. Have you ever been so afraid to try something that you actually got a "rush" when you finally did it? Snowboarding down a black diamond in the Rockies does it for me. Some people get that same feeling from pedaling as fast as they can down a hill on a mountain bike, or soloing a technical limb up a sheer cliff. The point is, fear can mask itself as fun. If this feeling is introduced over and over in a pre-marital sexual relationship, then the couple gets accustomed to it. Problems arise when the "fuel" of fear is removed at the wedding altar. No longer must the couple fear being discovered by friends or family. No longer must they fear pregnancy. If they are Christians, no longer must they fear God's judgment on fornication. Inevitably the flames of their passion, once fueled by fear, begins to burn differently, and the couple deduces that marital fire pales in comparison to pre-marital fire. They tell themselves they are "no longer in love". Divorce is not far

behind.

Social diseases and unwanted pregnancies aside, sex before marriage is a bad idea. Waiting until marriage insures that sex will be fueled by love not lust, and true friendship rather than fear. This is how the Maker of fire intended it to be.

### QUESTIONS:

1. List the ways one can get "burned" by experimenting with premarital sex.
2. List the blessings of waiting until marriage.
3. Are you committed to the first list or the second list?

### LIFELINE:

God's gift of sex is intended only for the marriage relationship. Sex outside of marriage is sin. Discuss the motivations for engaging in sexual sin.

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